

LAST BATTLES OF FREEDOM

•
**Being the Report of the Calcutta Conference
of
The Radical Democratic Party,
27th to 30th, December, 1944.**

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RADICAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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INTRODUCTION

THE Radical Democratic Party has come to stay in the political life of India. It represents the interests of those sections of the Indian people who form the vast majority of the population and whose voice is bound to be heard with growing attention in Indian politics. Since its inauguration in December 1940 the Party has grown from strength to strength. Throughout this period, the principal organs of the press in India, which are invariably owned and controlled by industrial and financial interests, have tried consistently to black-out the news and views of the Party. In spite of this press boycott the Party has undoubtedly become the most significant as well as controversial factor in Indian politics. Consequently there is an increasing public demand for literature about its attitude towards current problems and its manifold activities.

An attempt to meet this demand has been made in the following pages. They contain a record of the important resolutions passed and the speeches delivered in the last All-India Conference of the Party held in Calcutta from 27th to 30th December 1944. The main characteristics of the present political situation, the dangers and opportunities facing the fighters for India's democratic freedom, and the activities to be undertaken to ward off the dangers and to seize the opportunities, will be found discussed in this book.

In the history of the movement for democratic freedom of the Indian people, the Calcutta Conference will be regarded as an important landmark. It was a demonstration of the strength of popular forces organised under the banner of the Radical Democratic Party. At the

time of its inaugural Conference held about four years back, the Party started with a membership of 3,478. Two years later, at the time of its first All-India Conference held in Lucknow in December 1942, the membership had grown to 31,726. On the eve of the second All-India Conference in Calcutta, the membership had exceeded the mark of 100,000. The membership is composed of active elements in the political life of the country, spread out in all the provinces in India and in every important Indian State.

The Calcutta Conference was attended by 2187 delegates elected by the entire membership. Every Indian province and every major Indian State was represented. On the morning of December 27, a huge procession of the delegates was taken out, accompanied by hundreds of volunteers and thousands of local members and sympathisers of the Party. To several citizens of Calcutta, who had learnt from the nationalist press that the Radical Democratic Party was a comparatively minor organisation, this demonstration of strength came as a welcome surprise.

The Conference was held in an enormous pandal erected in the Wellington Square. The place was named 'Deshbandhu Nagar' in memory of the late C.R. Das, who had voiced the ideals of the Radical Democratic Party several years ago by declaring that we shall not be satisfied by substituting a brown bureaucracy in place of the white bureaucracy and that our Swaraj must be for the 98 per cent.

The Conference continued for four days, from 27th to 30th December, with a Delegates' Session in the morning and an open session in the evening. Everyday the open session was attended by about 10,000 people who had purchased admission tickets and crowded the visitors' galleries. Several others heard the proceedings of the Conference through the microphones which were set up in all directions outside the compound of the pandal.

The Calcutta Conference was memorable from another point of view. Throughout the days of the Conference, systematic and organised attempts were made by those quarters which were accustomed to speak of 'truth and non-violence', to disturb and, if possible, to break up the Conference. At the end of the delegates' procession on the 27th, a bottle of acid was thrown at the President-elect, Com. M. N. Roy, which missed its mark by an inch or two. The same evening, at the time of the opening session, small groups of hooligans tried to disturb the Conference by throwing stones at the iron fencing round the pandal and by shouting slogans. When these tactics did not succeed, attempts were made to set fire to the pandal by throwing incendiary materials from a distance. Scores of such attempts were made during the course of the

Conference. Once, on the evening of the 28th, a portion of the roof of the pandal caught fire which spread rapidly but was extinguished after a few minutes. The delegates and the huge audience which included several women kept to their places and the Conference proceeded with its work. Moreover, individuals from the delegation who strayed away from the pandal were deliberately misled into narrow lanes and mercilessly beaten by organised bands of hooligans. Some of them had to be carried to the hospital. Despite these disturbances the work of the Conference proceeded with increasing enthusiasm, which was shared not only by the delegates but by the audience as well. Indeed the audience increased day by day, and the last open session was the most crowded.

The attempts which were being made every day to disrupt the Conference and to burn the pandal had a most salutary effect on both the delegates as well as the visitors. The delegates went back to their respective provinces with added determination to smash those forces which were bent on preventing the rise of a genuine democratic movement in the country. The visitors were convinced that the opponents of the Radical Democratic Party had no rational arguments to justify their opposition and were reduced to cowardly tactics with a view to prevent the voice of the Radical Democratic Party from being heard by the people. The President of the Conference drove home the point by declaring that the whole episode was evidence of the rising tide of Fascism in our country.

The attitude of the Police as well as the nationalist press towards these disturbances and attacks was most significant. The nationalist press, which is supposed to champion the cause of Indian "freedom", had not a word to say against the deliberate interference with the freedom of speech and association which was implicit in the attempts to disrupt the Conference. The Police did nothing to prevent the disturbances and attempts at incendiarism, but on the contrary prevented the volunteers from getting out of the compound of the pandal in defence of law and order. Thus a small band of hooligans was enabled to pursue their tactics with impunity.

The Calcutta Conference was historic for yet another reason. It adopted the Draft Constitution of Free India prepared by Com. Roy. The Draft was prepared after a good deal of preliminary work. At the time of its inaugural Conference, the Party had formulated certain tentative principles of the Constitution of Free India. These fundamental constitutional principles were explained

and popularised in thousands of public meetings and conventions throughout the country, and were found to be in accord with the needs and aspirations of an overwhelming majority of the people belonging to all communities. On the basis of this experience, the Central Secretariat of the Party requested Com. Roy to prepare a Draft of a Constitution of Free India so as to present a concrete picture of the ideal of Indian freedom. The Calcutta Conference endorsed this Draft Constitution and resolved to build up a powerful popular movement in its support.

The Conference was inaugurated by the veteran leader of revolutionary Bengal, Amarendranath Chattopadhyaya, M. L. A. (Central), whose record of sacrifice and suffering for the cause of freedom is equalled by few. In his inaugural speech, he paid a high tribute to the Radical Democratic Party and the courageous leadership of Com. Roy. Then, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. J. C. Mookerji, delivered his speech welcoming the delegates and the President-elect.

Several messages were received by the Conference from friends and sympathisers in India and abroad. Of particular significance were those received from leaders of the British Labour movement. Mr. Arthur Greenwood, M. P., leader of the Labour Party in the House of Commons, said in the course of his message : " At a time when principles of democracy are threatened both in the east and the west, it is vital that all who believe in Radical Democracy should stand together in its defence. May your Party flourish." Mr. Phillips Price, M. P., another unfailing friend of the Party, said : " The time is fast approaching when radical changes, social and economic, would have to be undertaken in India for the sake of uplifting the standards of the Indian masses...Indian workers must secure a far wider franchise than they have now, which I hope will then be used to create a Co-operative Commonwealth in your great country." Fredrick Montague, M. P. in the course of his message said : " You may be assured that I am not alone in the British Labour Party desiring to see Indian labour take its proper and effective place in shaping India's future." In the course of her message, Miss Sutherland, Member of the National Executive and chief woman organiser of the British Labour Party, stated : " It gives me great joy to greet the Radical Democratic Party which voices the needs and hopes of India's toiling masses and, which like the British Labour Party, speaks for good society based on freedom, social justice and economic security for the common man." The late Mr. James Walker, M. P. then member of the National Executive of the British Labour Party, said : "I am very much pleased to learn of the rise and progress of the Radical Democratic Party with

a socialist programme. I trust the Conference will pave the way for the rise of a powerful democratic party in India voicing the aspirations of the people and particularly of the working-class of that great country." A message of greeting and best wishes for the success of the Conference was also received from Miss Bourne on behalf of the London labour women.

Before the President delivered his speech, fraternal greetings were given to the Conference by several veteran leaders from different provinces in India. Periyar E. V. Ramaswami Naiker, the leader and inspirer of the great non-Brahmin movement of southern India, announced his concurrence and that of his movement with the aims and objects of the Radical Democratic Party. So did the veteran Hemchandra Kanungo, a historian of the revolutionary movement in Bengal in which he himself had taken a leading part, who declared that he had found in the Radical Democratic Party that rational politics for which he had looked all his life. The high-light of these proceedings was the speech of Mr. Phillip Spratt, known throughout India as the hero of the Meerut Conspiracy Case, who declared that he had joined the Radical Democratic Party and reviewed the path on which he arrived to that decision. He described the Calcutta Conference as "enormous" and said that before he came to attend it, he did not know that the Party had grown to such dimensions. "But" he added, "I was not attracted by your size. I was attracted to your Party because your policy is right. The warning given by the Radical Democratic Party that India would go Fascist and that the Congress would bring Fascism is correct". Speeches by way of fraternal greetings were also delivered by Mr. S. Mutha Mudaliar, former Minister of Madras, Mr. M. A. Khan, the veteran Labour leader of the Punjab, and Mr. Manek Homi, President of the Jamshedpur Labour Federation.

Two important speeches delivered to the Conference by Com. Roy, his presidential address and the concluding speech, have been reproduced verbatim in the following pages. So is the Report which the Central Secretariat placed before the Conference for its adoption. The Report traces the history of the more important political developments in India during the preceding two years, the attitude adopted by the Party from time to time, and the growth and activities of the Party in various parts of the country. The presidential speeches analyse the present political situation, indicate the path which must be traversed by those striving for popular freedom, and give an effective reply to the critics of the Party.

Three important resolutions were passed in the Conference. One was on the Draft Constitution of Free India, another on the

political situation, and the third on the immediate task before the Party. These resolutions were thoroughly discussed in the Delegates' Sessions and were then moved and passed in the open sessions. These three resolutions and some of the important speeches delivered in their support have been reproduced in this book. The Draft Constitution of Free India has been published separately. *

The Conference also adopted a Manifesto addressed to fighters for Indian freedom. It is published below, as also an important speech by Tarkateertha Laxman Shastri Joshi, a leading authority on ancient as well as modern philosophy.

Besides considering the Report presented by the Central Secretariat and the three resolutions mentioned above, the Delegates' Session adopted a new Constitution for the Party. It is published separately.**

The delegates also elected a Central Political Council for the next year.

The Calcutta Conference issued a challenge as well as an invitation. It challenged those who are opposed to the Party to produce a programme more beneficial to the people than that of the Party. It also invited all fighters for genuine freedom to join the Party and help it to create a powerful democratic movement in the country. The challenge has not been accepted, but the invitation has met with growing acceptance. The Party is increasing in volume and influence. It will continue to grow till its task is accomplished.

* Available from Renaissance Publishers, Post Box 580, Calcutta, or Literature Department, Radical Democratic Party, 80 Faiz Bazar, Delhi.

** Available from Literature Department, Radical Democratic Party, 80 Faiz Bazar, Delhi.

THE LAST TWO YEARS

A POLITICAL SURVEY

COMRADES AND FELLOW-DELEGATES,

TWO years have elapsed since we met in an All-India Conference of the Party in Lucknow during the month of December 1942. Since then we had a special All-India Conference at Jharia in May 1944, but it was convened for the specific purpose of adopting and popularising the People's Plan of Economic Development for India. This Conference, therefore, provides the proper occasion to make a broad review of the developments of the last two years, so that we may proceed to discuss the problems which face the Indian people to-day and to decide upon our line of action for the future.

The Lucknow Conference was held at a time which coincided with the turning point of modern history. The fortunes of war had then just begun to swing in favour of the United Nations, and in India the sabotage movement of August 1942, had begun to die down. Till we met in Lucknow, we were almost exclusively concerned with the pressing problem of guarding the Indian front against the machinations of those who were attempting, for one reason or another, to take advantage of the anti-British feeling in the country for disorganising the war efforts and thus to facilitate the success of international Fascism. A favourable turn in the fortunes of the anti-Fascist forces in India and abroad, gave us the occasion, when we met in Lucknow, to turn our attention to the post-war developments which might be expected to follow the defeat of the Axis Powers. We arrived at important conclusions with regard to the post-war developments in India and abroad, and we decided the task of the Party and its plan of action in the light of those conclusions. It would be interesting and instructive to review subsequent developments with a view to ascertain whether our conclusions have been borne out by later history.

One main conclusion to which we came at Lucknow, and which was almost startling to the average nationalist, was that British Imperialism was dying away during the turmoil of this war and that no organised social force would be left in Great Britain after the termination of hostilities which would oppose the grant of freedom to the Indian people. We noted the virtual disappearance of foreign British investments. We marked the rising forces of British Democracy and anticipated a radically democratic Government for Great Britain in the post-war years. We concluded that an economy based on the export of capital, which was hitherto the life-breath of British Imperialism would be virtually impossible in the post-war period. We further noted the significance of the Anglo-Russian Pact, and anticipated that the democratic and progressive forces in the post-war world would gravitate towards the axis represented by that alliance. These anticipations led us to visualise a re-orientation in Indo-British relations. We expected that a democratic alliance can be built up between the progressive elements in India with those in England for the mutual benefit of both the peoples, this democratic alliance replacing the system of Imperialist exploitation which characterised pre-war Indo-British relations. Our co-operation with the British Government in India, which started as a temporary necessity confined to the war period, received a fresh meaning and a new sense of continuity in view of these expectations.

While noting this process of gradual extinction of British Imperialism, which favoured the chances of India's freedom, the Lucknow Conference noted at the same time another grave danger which threatened the future of the Indian people. That danger was represented by the Indian bourgeoisie, which provides the backbone of the Indian nationalist parties, stepping into the shoes of British Imperialism and depriving the Indian people of the possibility of democratic freedom by stabilising a virtually Fascist regime in India. We anticipated that the nationalist leaders, having done everything in their power to weaken and disorganise the war efforts, would begin to pose themselves as anti-Fascists and war supporters as soon as the military tide turned in favour of the United Nations. We were conscious of the fact that British vested interests, who represented the remnants of British Imperialism, would not necessarily be averse to come to an understanding with the erst-while opponents of war. We further expected that the spokesmen of American finance capital, which would be the only strong imperialist power in the post-war world would strive to take Indian nationalism under their protective wings and thus force the pace of the fascisation of India.

These two considerations namely, the gradual disappearance of British Imperialism and the rapid rise of native Fascism, enabled us to define the task of the Party. It was to build up the Radical

Democratic Party within the shortest possible time as a powerful democratic force, which would oppose the totalitarian claims of the vested interests and their political parties and would secure political power in the interests of the great majority of the Indian people.

Soon after the Lucknow Conference, the Congress leaders changed their tactics as anticipated by us. Mr. Gandhi, who had maintained judicious silence so long as the sabotage movement of August 1942 was at its zenith, began to protest that the Congress was not responsible for the movement and commenced a three-week's fast as a demonstration of his innocence. Though the fast was dictated as usual by his inner voice, he made it clear in a letter addressed to the Viceroy that he would abandon the fast if unconditionally released. During the fast the whole country was swept by cleverly managed propaganda designed to coerce the Government to release the Mahatma. Sensational reports about his precarious health were given the widest publicity, and prayer meetings were held on a large scale. The non-Party leaders did their bit by passing a resolution for his release, and three members resigned their seats in the Viceroy's Executive Council. The Viceroy, however, refused to budge, and when Mr. Gandhi realised that the political purpose of the fast had failed, he began to take liquid nourishment during the days of the fast, thus rendering the whole procedure doubly farcical.

One very significant fact which emerged during this chapter of spiritual blackmail was the devotion expressed by the entire commercial and industrial community in India to the cause of Indian nationalism. Practically every Chamber of Industry and Commerce in the country protested against Mr. Gandhi's detention and passed resolutions demanding the so-called National Government, thus proclaiming themselves as the economic backbone of Indian nationalism. The Radical Democratic Party alone took a different stand from all the rest. While expressing the hope that Mr. Gandhi may survive the fast, it pointed out that the fast was being utilised as a political weapon designed to take advantage of the superstition and blind faith of the people, and declared that "to exploit the superstition and backwardness of the people for furthering the interests of a political party is a method which must be unreservedly condemned."

Even after the furore created by the fast had died down, the attempts to foist a "National Government" on the Indian people by brow-beating or cajoling the Government continued unabated. Every occasion and every issue was utilised by the nationalist press to bring out the necessity of handing over political power to the nationalist leaders. The main issue which then agitated the public mind was the scarcity and dearness of food-grains and other essential

commodities, which led to an appalling and wide-spread famine in Bengal. The scarcity and famine were the result of hoarding and profiteering indulged in by big merchants and manufacturers; but these elements, while opposing every attempt to check the black-market, continued to press for a National Government which they urged was necessary to ensure adequate supplies to the civil population. This was another very clear instance of political black-mail, which the Government failed to face with any firmness. The nationalist press, instead of fastening the responsibility for the scarcity of goods on the commercial and manufacturing interests, alleged that the export of commodities to foreign countries by the accursed Government was the cause of the evil; and when this was proved to have been untrue, it started the propaganda that the common people of India, having no confidence in the government of the day, had commenced hoarding food and other essential commodities. Here again the Radical Democratic Party was alone in inviting public attention to the real cause of popular suffering and in suggesting stern measures against the black market which were necessary to ease the situation. After an almost interminable period of hesitation and indecision, the Government at last accepted a somewhat sensible policy by adopting the Food-Grains Policy Committee's Report. Even this was accepted without conviction and followed without firmness. The Government gave the impression of being internally divided, and even when good decisions were adopted, the machinery of the Government was too corrupt to put them into execution.

The unwillingness of the Government to adopt any positive programme, and its inability to alleviate popular suffering by combating the vested interests, enabled the nationalist press, which was controlled by these very vested interests, to sing the virtues of the National Government and to continue the merry game of political blackmail. In this atmosphere, when a good deal of kite-flying was being indulged in, the Central Executive Committee of the R. D. P. met in September, 1943, and discussed the question as to whether the National Government demanded by the Congress could be regarded as a practical possibility during the course of the war. After an objective analysis of the forces involved, the C. E. C. came to the conclusion that the present political stalemate may be expected to continue till after the end of the war. The Committee felt that the favourable turn in the military situation had placed the Government in a position from which it could disregard the opposition of nationalist leaders. The Committee further noted that the pressure which America was exercising on the British Government in favour of Indian nationalism had also considerably slackened. This was partly due to the realisation by the Americans that India could continue to be a safe base

of military operations against Japan without the co-operation of Indian nationalist leaders. The slackening of American pressure on the British Government was also partly due to the fact that, in the international correlation of forces, America was interested in maintaining cordial relations with Great Britain so that the latter may not be driven into a closer alliance with Soviet Russia. The C. E. C. therefore came to the conclusion that even the chances which appeared to favour the establishment of a National Government at the time of our Lucknow Conference had lessened as a result of subsequent developments, and that the nationalist movement in the country was destined to remain in a further period of despair and frustration. The C. E. C. further pointed out that the Congress leaders themselves were not keen to get out of the prison just yet, for they would not be placed in power on being released but would be faced with the communal problem which they would be unable to solve. The C.E.C. announced its conclusion that the inability of the nationalist leaders to solve the communal problem may lead to a continuation of the so-called political deadlock for some years even after the war. This meant that the democratic forces in the country would have a longer time to organise themselves for making a bid for political power, and that they would not be overwhelmed prematurely by the forces of native reaction. The C.E.C. decided to make full use of this opportunity.

Subsequent developments have fully corroborated the conclusions of the C.E.C., which were themselves based on the analysis made at the Lucknow Conference. The hopes entertained by nationalist circles that a political settlement favourable to the nationalist leaders would be announced by the outgoing Viceroy, and then by the in-coming Viceroy, were uniformly frustrated. Ultimately, however, Mr. Gandhi was released in May 1944 on grounds of health; and the persistent but unsuccessful attempts which he made during the last six months for getting back to power are perhaps the most instructive part of this political survey of India during the last two years.

Mr. Gandhi's tactics after his release were determined by two considerations. On the one hand, he was eager to compromise with the Government on almost any terms; on the other, he wanted his followers, who had participated in the August movement, to believe that he would not water down the uncompromising position taken in the famous August resolution of 'Quit-India'. To satisfy both these requirements would have been a delicate task of political jugglery, for which the Mahatma was certainly competent. A little mis-hap, however, spoiled the game. Mr. Gandhi first wrote to the Viceroy for an interview, which was refused. Thereafter he revealed his proposals to a Correspondent of a foreign newspaper, with the hope that the latter would convey them secretly to official notice. The Correspondent,

however, misunderstood what was expected of him, and released Mr. Gandhi's proposals to the press. This caused confusion in nationalist circles, which Mr. Gandhi tried to clarify by issuing conflicting statements, once announcing that the August resolution was his life-breath and then declaring that the same resolution had practically lapsed. When he found that the Government had taken no notice of his proposals, he wrote to the Viceroy again but was informed that his proposals did not meet the requirements of the situation.

Then a serious attempt was made to induce the Muslim League to join in the clamour for a National Government by offering some concessions to its communal demands. Mr. Gandhi met Mr. Jinnah and the press sought to create the impression that an agreement between the two was inevitable. The Central Executive Committee of the R.D.P., which was then meeting, considered the matter and came to the conclusion that no agreement could be expected to emerge from the negotiations. It was further of the opinion that no such agreement can settle the real issue which faces the Indian people, and which was "of creating conditions for the establishment of democratic freedom" in the country. The C. E. C. declared its opposition to the so-called National Government which was hoped to be set up on a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League, as it would "only establish the rule of the Indian upper classes whose interests and aspirations are antagonistic to the welfare of the vast majority of the Indian people." The C.E.C., however, noted that the possibility of such a communal settlement was meagre "because of the fact that the very existence of the parties (the Congress and the Muslim League) depends on their mutual opposition". The Congress, having no positive social programme which would have enabled it to rely on the intelligent support of the masses, was dependent on the nationalist Hindu middle-class, and could not afford to antagonise it by agreeing to a division of the country. On the other hand, the Muslim League could not afford to whittle down its demands without losing the purpose of its existence. The negotiations accordingly broke down, and the correspondence between the two leaders which was subsequently released showed that there was never any basis for such an agreement.

The inability of the nationalist leaders either to bring about a communal settlement, or to resolve the political deadlock, or to devise any other way for the political advancement of the country, has deepened the sense of despair and frustration amongst nationalist circles. In this situation, the Radical Democratic Party shows the only way for the attainment of democratic freedom and gives a fresh hope to those that join its ranks. This Conference will have to devise ways and means to

bring about a rapid development of the party, so that potentially progressive elements from frustrated nationalism may see the new path and join us in our march towards people's freedom.

After the failure of the communal talks, Mr. Gandhi's followers, obviously under his guidance, are trying to re-organise the Congress on the principle of "One leader" and "One party". Though Mr. Gandhi vehemently protested not so long ago that the Congress had nothing to do with the movement of August 1942, those Congressmen who participated in the movement are given a special status while re-organising the Congress. The Congress is now coming out as an openly Fascist party, and that is indeed the only way in which it can survive in the political life of India. Fascism always develops in an atmosphere of national frustration. This frustration on the one hand, and the unwillingness of the British Government to make any positive approach for the solution of the political problem on the other, have created a void in the political life of the country which can be filled up either by the rise of a Fascist party or by the rapid development of the Radical Democratic Party. This Conference will have to take note of both the danger as well as the opportunity inherent in this situation.

Incidentally, the recent attempts to re-organise the Congress on the basis of rigid internal discipline have thrown the members of the Communist Party of India out of the charmed circle of Indian nationalism. Throughout the period under review, the Communist Party adopted and advocated the demand for the National Government and clamoured for unity between the Congress and the Muslim League. How this serves the interests of the working class to whom they profess to be loyal, and how this intensifies the class war by which they swear, are questions which may be left to the conscience of the members of that Party. They propagate the view that a National Government is necessary for the anti-Fascist war, conveniently forgetting that nationalism has always been the basis of fascism. They have allowed themselves to be the henchmen of native fascism, and it is doubtful whether even their expulsion from the Congress will make them change their line of action.

The position and attitude of the Muslim League have remained unchanged during these two years. It has failed to co-operate with, or come nearer to, the progressive and democratic forces in the country. Its programme remains purely negative, advocating the demand of homelands for the Muslims but keeping silent on the economic and social issues which face the Muslim masses. Indeed, at the time of the Gandhi-Jinnah talks, it became clear that important sections of the Muslim League would have welcomed the prospect of forming an anti-democratic front with the Congress, had the latter conceded their

communal demand. This indicates the necessity of securing, within the fold of the Radical Democratic Party, an increasing number of progressive elements from the Muslim population.

Thus, looking to the alignment of political parties in India as a whole, it has become clear that the Radical Democratic Party will have largely to rely upon itself alone for giving expression to the urge of the Indian people for democratic freedom.

If we turn to examine the attitude of the Government during the period under review, it will be found that the Government pursued a very curious and dangerous policy, which must receive the serious consideration of this Conference. Apparently, the Government consistently refused to yield to the stage-managed demand for a National Government and gave the impression that it would not follow the policy of appeasing the erst-while opponents of the war. At the same time the Government almost invariably yielded to the pressure of Indian vested interests and rarely opposed the demands of the commercial and industrial classes. This attitude rendered the Government incapable of dealing effectively with the grave situation created by the scarcity of food and clothing, or of adopting any other programme calculated to promote popular welfare. Its failure to solve pressing social problems, a failure caused by its unwillingness to hurt vested interests, increased the unpopularity of the Government and rendered it more vulnerable to the attacks of the political henchmen of these very vested interests. In effect, this amounted to a policy of appeasement introduced through the back-door. This was the main factor which hindered the crystallisation of the democratic forces in the country during this period. The refusal of the Government to give any share of political power to the representatives of Indian democracy was only the political counterpart of the policy of camouflaged appeasement.

The new Viceroy, in the initial period of his appointment, made some speeches which gave a fresh hope to progressive circles in India. He announced his intention of giving precedence to the solution of pressing economic issues over political and constitutional questions. He declared that the chief aim of his government would be to raise the standard of living of the people. All these announcements however proved ineffectual, and the hopes to which they gave rise soon subsided. The policy of appeasement of the Indian vested interests continued as before. Finally it terminated in the appointment to the new Department of Post War Planning of an author of the Bombay Plan, which embodied the programme of Indian fascism and which was condemned by progressive elements both in India and England.

Indian businessmen and industrialists have been following a very curious and subtle policy. On the one hand, they are the economic backbone of nationalism and lose no opportunity of supporting the Congress overtly and covertly. They also evince an increasing eagerness to strike a deal with American finance capital. At the same time, they have succeeded in either cajoling or browbeating the Government of India into giving them a predominating voice in the economic affairs of the country. It appears that their position vis-a-vis the nationalist movement and their readiness to develop contacts with American capital give them a greater bargaining power in dealing with the British Government. But if the Government hopes, as it seems to do, that it can wean the Indian vested interests away from nationalism and American Imperialism by offering them greater concessions, it is grievously mistaken. Whatever concessions the Government may offer to the Indian commercial and industrial classes, the latter will continue to support and intensify the nationalist movement, for a national-capitalist state can alone guarantee them a perpetuation of their economic privileges. The Indian vested interests can get security in the post-war world only by erecting a Fascist State in India, and for that purpose they must have a strong nationalist party in the country. Thus the Government of India, in refusing to co-operate with democratic forces in the country and in making concessions to native vested interests, is essentially pursuing the traditional policy of appeasement.

At Lucknow we had decided to make special efforts to bring about a better understanding and co-operation between the democratic forces in Great Britain and India. We had resolved "to acquaint British Democracy with the true situation in this country so that reaction may not be helped to triumph with the plausible slogan of national freedom." Accordingly an outstanding member of the party, Com. A. K. Pillai, was sent to England in December 1943. Later on Com. V. B. Karnik, the General Secretary of the Party, along with Comrades Maniben Kara and M. A. Khan, visited England as Delegates of the Indian Federation of Labour to the World Trade Union Congress. As a result of the strenuous efforts of these comrades, a perceptible change in the attitude of some progressive sections of British opinion towards the Indian problem is being observed. This was particularly noticeable at the time of the Parliamentary debate on India in June 1944, when for the first time the claims of Indian democracy found an expression on the floor of the House of Commons. Later, in October 1944, the resolution on India passed at the Blackpool Conference of the British Trade Union Congress gave an indication of its appreciation of the political demands of the exploited

masses in India. In India also a slight change in that direction was noticed when the Viceroy said in August 1944 in reply to Mr. Gandhi that the solution of the political deadlock in India does not entirely depend on an agreement on the communal question but that "some other interests" have also to be taken into account. The change of outlook, however, is still very slight and inadequate, and the efforts to make British Democracy and its representatives in India aware of the reality of the Indian situation will have to be considerably increased to achieve the desired result.

It does not seem necessary to survey the international situation in great detail. It has developed according to the forecast which we made at the Lucknow Conference on the basis of an objective analysis of the forces involved in this war. The financial position of Great Britain and her huge liabilities to other countries were officially described in a White Paper recently issued by the British Government. This factor, coupled with the fact that all the political parties in Great Britain have accepted a very far-reaching programme of social security, makes it clear that England will find it impossible to revert to the old pattern of Imperialism in the post-war period. The increasing co-operation between England and Russia which we anticipated is also coming into greater relief. America will be the only powerful imperialist country in the post-war years, and American financiers have been providing ample evidence of their post-war ambitions particularly in the eastern hemisphere. As we expected, the European countries which are being liberated one by one from the Nazi yoke are having anti-fascist provisional governments which contain considerable socialist and communist elements.

Some misgiving is likely to be caused by recent happenings in Belgium and Greece, where the British forces supported the established provisional governments against insurrectionary attempts of more leftist elements. This however is not contrary to our general conclusions, for we never expected the present British Government to positively support leftist insurrections. The proposition which we enunciated at Lucknow, that the defeat of the military power of fascism will result in the establishment of democratic states which must rapidly march towards socialism, remains unaffected by these incidents. Nor can these incidents be taken to mean that British public opinion retains the same international outlook as before the war. It should be borne in mind that a large number of members of Parliament refused to vote in favour of Mr. Churchill on this issue but remained neutral on account of the issue having been made a motion of confidence in the Government. We have also to realise that the Greek leftists committed a tactical blunder in precipitating a crisis at this stage by organising an insurrection. Even then the provisional governments in Greece and

Belgium are likely to move more to the left as a result of these developments.

Having surveyed the important political developments in India and abroad, we may proceed to a closer consideration of the Party and its activities during the last two years.

The Lucknow Conference had placed a triple programme before party members, viz., to hold People's Conventions and organise People's Committees on the basis of the Fundamental Principles of a Free India Constitution formulated by the Party; to organise Co-operative Societies of consumers and producers; and to develop the trade union movement both by extending the field of activity and improving the quality of the work.

The organisation of People's Conventions was by far the most important work of the Party during the last two years. More than 350 Conventions have been held in different parts of the country, and these Conventions were preceded by thousands of preparatory meetings. The total population covered by these Conventions was more than 6 millions. The Special All-India Conference of the Party which was held in Jharia reviewed this work with approval, and resolved to inaugurate the second stage of the campaign for having the Constitution of the future government of the country framed on the basis of the Fundamental Principles. The Conference directed that more importance should henceforth be given to the organisational aspect of the work, so that District and Provincial Conventions may be held on the basis of local People's Committees, leading finally to the National People's Convention.

It will be recalled that at the time of the Lucknow Conference most of our Party units were unaccustomed to mass activity. The work in connection with the People's Conventions provided them with the opportunity of undertaking large-scale mass propaganda and also of testing whether our political conclusions accord with popular opinion. It was found that the response to the general political approach of the Party and to the Fundamental Principles formulated by the Party was everywhere enthusiastic and spontaneous. This experience gave fresh confidence to party units, and the work in connection with the People's Conventions increased their numerical strength and general influence.

The work of organising co-operative societies was beset with difficulties. The success of the work depended to a large extent on the attitude of officers in charge of supplies and also of the provincial Co-operative Departments. Nevertheless a large number of consumers' co-operative societies were organised in both urban and rural areas. The Jharia Conference reviewed the difficulties created by the fact that

the government officials were largely under the influence of the commercial community and of rival political parties, and emphasised the necessity of developing a powerful co-operative movement throughout the country with the object of bringing out the necessity of the co-operative distribution of commodities. The Conference also urged the formation of producers' co-operatives.

The influence of the Party in the trade union movement has also grown. The Indian Federation of Labour, which comprises a large majority of organised labour in the country, was inspired and largely organised by Party members. It is the only All India organisation of trade unions committed to the programme of opposing Fascism nationally and internationally. Alarmed at the increasing influence of the Party in the trade union movement, nationalist circles started a virulent propaganda against the Federation. But the attempt has already failed, for the Federation has continued to grow in membership and influence in spite of this propaganda. There is, however, a great scope for further development of a genuine trade union movement in the country, and this Conference will have to consider ways and means of intensifying our efforts in that direction.

The triple plan of action which was laid down in the Lucknow Conference was not, however, intended to cover the whole scope of party activities. The main work of the Party was to increase its membership and influence through direct Party propaganda. The plan laid down at Lucknow was auxiliary to that main task. It was made clear in the Lucknow Conference that we must increase the membership of the Party several times. Since the concept of a mass party was different from the pattern of a rigid party exclusively of professional revolutionaries—a pattern to which some of us were long accustomed—there was a good deal of hesitation in admitting new members to the Party in accordance with the Lucknow decision. The matter was accordingly discussed again by the Central Executive Committee which met in September 1943, and the necessity of developing a mass party within the shortest possible time was re-emphasized. A very rapid increase in party membership has taken place since then, both on account of increased party work and a more general appreciation of the necessity of enlarged membership. In the two provinces of Bengal and Bihar alone, the Party has a membership of over 40,000. Membership has also grown in all other provinces, particularly in the United Provinces, Bombay, Maharashtra, Karnatak, Madras, Tamilnad and Andhra. In three provinces, which were not covered by the Party at the time of the Lucknow Conference, viz, Orissa, Assam and the North West Frontier Province, Party units having a numerous membership have

already been established. Party units have also been organised in all the major Indian States. In a few provinces like the Punjab and Sind, and in some of the smaller Indian States, the Party could not register more than a slow growth, which was largely due to the lack of an adequate number of political workers. On the whole, however, the Party has grown more than three-fold during the last two years, and the reports received from various centres on the eve of this Conference show that the Party membership has just exceeded the mark of a 100,000.

The September 1943 meeting of the C.E.C., to which an allusion has already been made, endorsed the demand of universal suffrage for the entire adult population of India. The demand was popularised in thousands of meetings, and has been enthusiastically welcomed by the people.

The same meeting of the C.E.C. drew the attention of the Party to the vital importance of elections to Provincial Assemblies which may be held hereafter, and the necessity for the Party to win the elections in a number of previously selected constituencies. Recently the Party participated in electoral contests. Particular mention may be made of the bye-election for a seat in the Orissa Assembly, and of the Municipal elections in the United Provinces. It has been found that the propaganda in connection with the elections is extremely useful in bringing the Party and its programme to the attention of the public. It brings new elements into the Party and increases its general influence. Though a large number of Party candidates succeeded in the U. P. Municipal elections, it has been the general experience that it was not possible to get a success proportionate to the influence of the Party on account of the extreme corruption and mal-practices which prevail in these elections and also the lack of electioneering experience on the part of our members. In view of the necessity of participating in electoral contests, and in view of the importance of their result, each provincial Party organisation will have to provide technical training in electioneering matters to some of its prominent members.

The urgency of undertaking propaganda amongst the middle class intelligentsia was repeatedly emphasized during the last two years. Recently this propaganda has shown a considerable increase. The response has been very favourable everywhere, and the extent of opposition from short-sighted nationalists has greatly diminished and in some places altogether vanished. Besides direct propaganda in the intelligentsia, attempts were made to promote the renaissance movement by organising Renaissance Clubs in a number of cities and towns. Over forty Renaissance Clubs are functioning today. In order to study and clarify the approach of the Party towards women's problems, an All-India Women's

Study Camp was held in Dehradun in June 1943. The campers decided to organise Jagrit Mahila Clubs, and such clubs now exist in many cities. The work among students is being carried on through Radical Students' Unions, and in most educational centres these Unions have increased in strength and in the scope of their activities. It has however to be realised that the work amongst the middle class intelligentsia, both of direct propaganda as well as through the associations mentioned above, requires to be very greatly and rapidly augmented. It is being increasingly realised that no single factor is more vital to the growth of the Party than the presence of a sufficiently large number of intelligent and capable workers, who mostly come from middle class recruits. Their absence in adequate numbers not only hinders the growth of mass activity, but also prevents the Party from acquiring its due social and political status. This Conference will have to consider this question in all its aspects and devise an adequate machinery for propaganda amongst the middle class intelligentsia.

Another activity which has been recently undertaken by the Party is the organisation of the People's Guard. Already a number of Party units have started the work of enrolling volunteers for the People's Guard, and the importance of the matter is generally recognised. It is expected that each Party unit will soon have organised its volunteer corps.

It is not possible to review all the multifarious activities of the Party in its country-wide branches, but a special mention must be made of the People's Plan and the propaganda for its popularisation. The Plan was drafted under the guidance of Com. Roy by members appointed by the Indian Federation of Labour who were also members of the Party. The special Party Conference at Jharia was held with the object of endorsing the People's Plan. Before and after the Conference, intensive propaganda was made throughout the country to explain the Plan and its political implications amongst all classes of society. The Plan has become universally popular and also received considerable official notice, though the nationalist press generally tried to ignore it.

For a long time we have been feeling the necessity of preparing a concrete outline of a Constitution of India which will embody the fundamental laws of political freedom and economic reorganisation required by the Indian people, and also present our solution of the Communal Problem in concrete terms. The Central Secretariat ultimately entrusted the work of drafting the Constitution to Com. Roy, and the draft prepared by him has been fully considered and adopted by the Central Secretariat. It will be placed before this Conference for its

approval and endorsement. It will be necessary to organise the widest public discussion of the draft through meetings and conferences.

The large influx of new membership as well as the complicated and multifarious tasks which the Party has undertaken have brought out the necessity of giving political training and party training to members, new and old. Attempts in that direction have been made by a number of Party units but they require to be systematised and increased. With ever increasing membership, Party units will have to set up a more or less permanent machinery for political and party training.

Another factor calculated to increase the efficiency of the Party is the proper and co-ordinated functioning of all Party Offices from top to bottom. Special efforts are being made for that purpose, and most provincial offices and many district offices are now functioning more or less satisfactorily. The drive for efficiency will have to be maintained till the whole Party begins to function as a fully co-ordinated and promptly responsive machine.

Another aspect to which the attention of this Conference must be drawn is the urgency of building up an adequate Party fund for central, provincial and local Party organisation. Most of our units have reached a stage where further progress is mainly hindered by want of sufficient financial resources. All party units will have to give serious attention to this problem.

The Lucknow Conference set up a Central Secretariat of five members which was expected to be in more or less permanent session. However, for a considerable time after the Lucknow Conference, the majority of the Secretaries had to engage themselves in urgent work connected with the development of provincial party organisations. Gradually, as the provincial parties grew and began to evolve an independent leadership, some of the Secretaries could devote themselves to the increasing work of the Central Office. This certainly increased the efficiency of the Central Office, so that the experiment of setting up a Secretariat could be said to have succeeded. Many of the Provincial parties have also adopted the practice by now. This has however, rendered the position of Executive Committees, both Central and Provincial, somewhat anomalous. It is certainly desirable to have a machinery at the centre and in the provinces to advise Central and Provincial Secretariats on questions of policy; and some machinery is also required to enable the Secretariats to consult with representatives of various subordinate units on executive matters. An Executive Committee, however, has been found to be too large to meet frequently for discharging its executive

duties and too small to function as an advisory body. Some changes in the Party Constitution have accordingly been found necessary. Some changes are also called for in view of the decision to develop the Party with a mass membership. For these and similar considerations, the Central Secretariat has drafted a new Constitution for the Party which has been circulated to Party units, and which will be placed before this Conference for its adoption.

The experience of the last two years has shown that a people's Party having a rational programme can be built up in India. In the history of Indian politics, nobody else has even attempted the stupendous task of building up a democratic party with a rational programme. All others had taken the easy path of organising political parties by exploiting one popular sentiment or another, and for that very reason the easy success which initially attended their efforts resulted in frustration and demoralisation. But a Party like ours is necessary if our people are to have a bright future, and our experience has shown that we can perform the historically necessary task of organising and developing the forces of Indian democracy under the banner of the Radical Democratic Party. Naturally our path is far from easy. As pioneers of a new way of politics, which implies a new way of life, we have to force a path for ourselves through darkness and difficulty. But we have already travelled a long way through the darkness and have faced many a difficulty, and this has hardened us and made us conscious that we shall succeed. We are fully aware that our task is difficult, but we also know that our task is great and that we shall perform it. With this knowledge and this unique experience, let us work with tenfold vigour and determination till we reach our goal. And we alone can do it.

*—Being the report submitted by the Central Secretariat
to the Calcutta Conference.*

THE LAST BATTLES FOR FREEDOM

By **M. N. Roy**

Fellow-delegates and Fellow-fighters for freedom throughout the country !

This is the second conference of the Radical Democratic Party. Since its foundation just four years ago, our party has had two All-India Conferences. The first conference of the party met at Lucknow at the end of December 1942, exactly two years after its foundation. In the beginning of May this year, a Special Conference of the party met at Jharia. Those two conferences are landmarks in the contemporary history of India. The Special Conference was a milestone on India's road to freedom. It adopted the People's Plan of Economic Development, and placed that historic document before the country. It has divided the country into two camps. The hollowness of the deceptive slogan of national unity has been exposed. But that does not weaken the struggle for freedom. On the contrary, the controversy about economic development of the country has clarified the social issues underlying the political movement. In consequence thereof, the struggle for freedom is raised above the level of vague sentimentality and confused idealism.

The People's Plan puts a concrete content into the ideal of freedom. Brave words and beautiful phrases can no longer deceive. Political freedom, national independence, is not sufficient by itself.

It is the means to an end. The end is the welfare of the people. The present political regime is antagonistic to popular welfare. Therefore it must go. That proposition implies that it must be replaced by another political regime which will promote the welfare of the people. To define the welfare of the people, to visualise how that ideal can be attained, is the bounden duty of all who claim to be champions of freedom. It is not enough to declare that one stands for the freedom and welfare of the people. It is necessary to say what will promote popular welfare, and how the goal will be attained.

The People's Plan of Economic Development does that. It presents the picture of freedom needed by the overwhelming majority of the Indian people. Endorsement of the People's Plan, therefore, is the test of the political regime which will replace the present Government. Now the people can judge who are their real representatives. They have a yardstick to measure. Brave words and vague phrases won't do any longer.

As against the People's Plan, another plan of economic development has been placed before the country. It is the so-called Bombay Plan sponsored by big business. It also promises to promote the economic welfare of the people. But a plan is not to be judged by any promise, but on its own merits. Independent expert opinion is that the plan sponsored by eight leading industrialists would make the rich richer and the poor poorer. The authors and supporters of the Bombay Plan have protested against this critical opinion. But they have not been able to prove that it is wrong.

Yet all the older political parties and leaders have tacitly if not always explicitly, supported the Big Business Plan. The Congress is well-known to be very closely associated with the authors of the plan. Any possible doubt about the attitude of the older parties towards the Bombay plan, which frankly postulates a dictatorship of big business, has been dispelled by what happened in the autumn session of the Central Assembly. One Muslim League member had tabled a resolution calling upon the Government not to entertain the capitalist plan. The Congress and the League conspired together and torpedoed the resolution. The Congress Party amendment which superseded the original resolution could not be carried without the support of the League. During the debate, the Leader of the Congress Party did not have one word to say against the Big Business Plan. On the contrary he went out of his way to shower eulogies on the Member in charge of the Department of Planning and Development of the Government, who is one of the authors of the Bombay Plan. If that is not supporting the Big Business Plan, then human behaviour has no logic, and words have no meaning.

The Bombay Plan is not a plan of all-round economic development. It is a plan of industrialisation, and emphasis is laid on expansion of heavy industries. Growth of modern industries is undoubtedly a condition for economic development. But under the given world conditions any substantial expansion of industries in India must take place on the basis of internal market. So, the first condition for industrialisation is to increase the purchasing power of the people, and the majority of the Indian people live on land. Therefore no industrialisation to the extent of causing an all-round economic development is possible without solving the agrarian problem in the first place. And solution of the agrarian problem in an economically backward country like India means a radical readjustment of the relations of property in land.

The Bombay plan is conspicuously silent about this crucial problem of India's economic development. It proposes to increase the purchasing power of the people, but does not show how that miracle will be performed. An increase in the total industrial production does not automatically increase the standard of living of the people. Purchasing power is the measure of the people's standard of living, and purchasing power of the people can be increased only by a wide distribution of the national wealth. The Bombay Plan again is silent about the question of distribution. The increase of national wealth visualised by it will, therefore, remain in the possession of the industrialists and the result will be to make the rich richer; and the rich can never be richer without making the poor poorer.

As against the Big Business Plan of economic development, the People's plan sponsored by the Radical Democratic Party advocates an agrarian revolution, pointing out how that radical change in the social *status quo* is the basic condition for any economic development such as will promote popular welfare. The People's plan further shows that industries built on the basis of private ownership and the capitalist mode of production cannot improve the economic condition of the masses, and maintains that a generally beneficial economic development is possible only on the basis of production for use.

The People's Plan, therefore, presents the picture of freedom needed by the people. It is the acid test for the sincerity of the pretensions to stand for the freedom of the Indian people. The older parties, indeed nationalism generally, has been put to that test and has failed.

The Special Conference of the Radical Democratic Party was a milestone on the Road to Indian Freedom, because it placed before the country the People's Plan, which in no time clarified the political atmosphere, exposed the older parties as the spokesmen of big business, of vested interests in general. They want a change of the political

regime, but would replace the present regime by a government which would do the bidding of big business. Such a government even if it is completely free from all foreign influence, cannot possibly promote the welfare of the people. Because, capitalism will necessarily make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Therefore, to attain freedom for the people, a different type of political regime must be visualised—a regime under which effective political power will be vested in the people.

The political life of this country has for years centred around the controversy over the future Constitution of government. The older parties only demand transfer of power without specifying to whom the power should be transferred and for which purpose it would be used. They demand that power should be transferred to themselves. Consequently, there is a quarrel about the distribution of the loaves and fishes of power.

It goes to the credit of the Radical Democratic Party to have demanded that power should be transferred to the people. Already on its very foundation, the Radical Democratic Party formulated the fundamental principles of a Democratic Constitution. It appealed to all the parties and leaders to endorse those principles and mobilise popular support as the sanction for their enforcement. If they had responded to our appeal, and acted according to the procedure suggested by us, the constitutional problem would have been solved, and the British Government would not be able to stand on the way, even if it wanted. But a Democratic Constitution—a government of the people by the people—is not what the older parties and leaders want. They want to establish a government for the people, a sort of government which is bound to make a fraud of freedom.

The first Conference of the Radical Democratic Party held at Lucknow at the end of December 1942 placed before the country the fundamental principles of democratic freedom, and demanded that the Constitution of a Free India should be framed on that basis. The Radical Democratic Party did not follow the practice of other parties. It did not prescribe the future of the people and want them to fall in line. Having formulated the fundamental principles of democratic freedom, and demanded that the constitution of a Free India should be framed on that basis, the Lucknow Conference of the Radical Democratic Party resolved to submit those principles for discussion and endorsement by the people. That was an unprecedented practice in the political life of the country. The sovereignty of the people was recognised. The future of the country was to be determined by the sovereign will of the people.

In pursuance of the resolution of its first conference, the Radical Democratic Party held numerous People's Conventions

throughout the country. The fundamental principles of a democratic Constitution were explained in thousands of meetings, in which delegates to People's Conventions were elected. The Conventions of People's delegates once again discussed the principles of democratic Constitution, and endorsed them. For the first time in the history of the political movement of this country, the people were given the opportunity to express their will freely and intelligently. There was no hero worship ; no blind faith was demanded. Other parties had the fullest freedom to place before the people alternative principles and have them endorsed instead of those formulated by the Radical Democratic Party. None dared oppose the picture of freedom outlined by the Radical Democratic Party.

The press controlled by vested interests may black out news about the activities of the common man. The activities of the Radical Democratic Party, however, are not manufactured by publicity. They took place, whether the press took any notice of them or not. In one year, no less than 350 people's conventions were held throughout the country. The total number of delegates elected in preparatory meetings was more than 17,000 ; Each convention was preceded on the average by 16 such preparatory meetings, in which the fundamental principles of democratic freedom were explained and voted upon. The total population covered by the Conventions was more than five million. The campaign so far has been in the nature of a gallop pole. And as such it proves that a Constitution framed on the basis of the fundamental principles of democratic freedom formulated by the Lucknow Conference of the Radical Democratic Party will have the support of an overwhelming majority of the entire Indian population.

The full text of the Constitution has now been drafted. It will be submitted to this Conference for endorsement. Then it will be placed before the country. So, this Second Conference of the Radical Democratic Party will be another mile-stone on the road to Indian freedom. Nobody standing for democratic freedom and the welfare of the masses of the Indian people will find anything objectionable in the Draft Constitution we shall place before the country. We are not laying down the law. We are giving a concrete expression to the will of the people. That again is not an arbitrary claim. The Constitution drafted by us on the basis of the fundamental principles of democratic freedom, which are generally accepted by the modern world, will be submitted to the verdict of the people. Other parties have the right to place before the people alternative proposals. But all must be prepared to accept the verdict of the people. Whoever will object to this procedure, will forfeit the claim to represent the people, and champion people's freedom.

The long drawn-out controversy about the future Constitution of the country will thus be closed by a verdict of the people. The question concerning the fate of the people will be taken out of the hands of monopolistic parties and quarrelling politicians. By advocating this democratic procedure for ending the controversy about the political future of the country, the Radical Democratic Party proves itself to be the champion of the sovereignty of the people, and thus vindicates its claim to be the only party of the people.

That is not a totalitarian claim. There can be more than one party in a country. No nation is a homogeneous whole. There are different classes and diverse interests. They cannot all be represented, protected and promoted by one single party. The Radical Democratic Party does not pretend to represent the entire Indian people. It is the party of the common man, and the majority of any people is composed of the common man. As the interest of the toiling majority, toiling with brain as well as with brawn, is identical, it need not have more than one party, and the party representing the majority, (in India it is a ninety p. c. majority) can reasonably be called the People's Party.

The claim of a party is to be judged by its programme. The programme of the Radical Democratic Party elaborated in the People's Plan of Economic Development and now in the Constitution of Free India, clearly and unequivocally reflects the legitimate aspirations of the toiling majority. Political reorganisation of the Indian society on the basis of a democratic constitution, which will be placed before the country by this conference, and its economic reconstruction according to the People's Plan, will establish genuine freedom for the people and open before all the avenues of material prosperity, cultural progress and moral uplift.

No other party has committed itself to such a programme. They all may talk of independence and freedom. But none has presented to the people a picture of the freedom they are supposed to be striving for, nor has explained how political power will be used once it is transferred to Indian hands. Therefore, the Radical Democratic Party is the party of the Indian people—of the majority composed of the common man whose political freedom and economic welfare are conditional upon a radical reorganisation of society. The Radical Democratic Party alone advocates such a revolution. Its programme is summarised in its name. Formal democracy, declaration of formal and legal rights without effective power, does not establish freedom for the common man. Therefore we stand for Radical Democracy. Political power must be the instrument for reorganising society so as to free it from the domination of

vested interests. Vested interests must go ; common weal must prevail. Otherwise, freedom will be a fraud—for the majority. That is our demand. Therefore we call ourselves Radical Democrats.

Can such a stupendous task be accomplished by a party only four years old ? The growth of the party within this short time does not leave any room for doubt. Numerically, the party has grown nearly threefold since the Lucknow Conference held two years ago. According to reports, the membership of the party will reach the figure of a lakh before long. When we remember that this unprecedented growth has taken place in the face of difficulties which sometimes appeared to be almost insuperable, it becomes clear that the formation of the Radical Democratic Party opened a new chapter in the history of India's struggle for freedom.

The founders of the Radical Democratic Party and many of its other members are not new comers in the political field. They have been in the forefront of the struggle for freedom for a generation and more. All the time they were motivated by the ideas and ideals which are now incorporated in the programme of the Radical Democratic Party. These ideas developed and the ideals crystallised over a whole period—of 25 years of political activity. The Radical Democratic Party, therefore, is really not a new party. It has a long tradition, longer than that of the Gandhist Congress, which was born in 1920. Politically, I am fifteen years older.

The tragic experience made during the last war helped me to outgrow the limitations of romantic Nationalism. I had the good fortune of coming in touch with modern political ideas. That experience opened up before me a new perspective of Indian situation. Revolution ceased to be a romance.

Already in 1916, I was convinced that freedom was not worth fighting for unless it meant social liberation of the masses. I realised that such freedom for India required much more than mere replacement of the foreign rule by an Indian Government, that it was conditional upon a gigantic social convulsion. A dispassionate scientific study of Indian history, in the context of the history of the world, brought me to the conclusion that all the innumerable evils of modern India, including political subjugation, had resulted from the one single fact that India had not experienced the philosophical and social revolutions which laid the foundation of modern Europe. A fossilised social structure held together by reactionary cultural traditions constituted the real chain of slavery of the Indian people. Indeed that factor also provided the social foundation for the political superstructure of successive foreign rules.

These conclusions derived from a scientific study of history were set forth in my book 'India in Transition', which was written in 1921 and published the next year. The perspective of the struggle for Indian freedom, the eventual alignment of social forces involved in the struggle, were visualised, and the programme of the Radical Democratic Party was outlined, already then in that book nearly a quarter of a century ago. The programme of a party of the Indian people, which would eventually rise to lead the long overdue social revolution, was elaborated a year later in a pamphlet called "What Do We Want?"

Ever since then, the programme which has at last been adopted by the Radical Democratic Party was presented before the country from time to time. It was recommended to the Ahmedabad Congress in the form of an open letter in 1921. It was again submitted to the Gaya Congress the next year, and on many more occasions subsequently. The only Congress leader who was influenced by modern democratic ideas was C. R. Das. He declared that replacement of the white bureaucracy by a brown bureaucracy would not be freedom, and demanded Swaraj for the 98 per cent. The Radical Democratic Party honours him as one of its pioneers.

A quarter of a century ago, a searching analysis of the structure of Indian society forced upon me the realisation that Indian freedom could not be attained under the banner of Nationalism. By focussing all attention on the political issue of independence from the foreign rule, Nationalism ignores the fundamental social issues. By inciting racial animosity, it glosses over the age-long conflict of classes inside the native society. The doctrine of national unity against the foreign rules demands social peace, which means maintenance of the *status quo*,—subordination of the toiling majority to a privileged minority. Nationalism is by nature traditionalist. Therefore, it cannot promote the long overdue liquidation of Mediaevalism. Freedom of the Indian people is conditional upon a social revolution, which Nationalism, by its very nature, can never advocate. India must experience a revolution, known in history as the bourgeois revolution, which will clear away the ugly relics of a dead past. But the Indian bourgeoisie will not lead the bourgeois revolution in India.

This conclusion about the way of the Indian Revolution, theoretically arrived at a quarter of a century ago, has been corroborated by the entire history of the nationalist movement in the intervening period, and finally by the concretely defined social programme of Indian Nationalism, namely, the Bombay Plan. Any economist worth the name knows that in an economically backward country like India the agrarian problem is the crux of the national economy. The internal

market in an agrarian country can be expanded in the first place by a redistribution of the income from land. That means, readjustment of the relations of property in land, in other words, an agrarian revolution. The social content of the so-called bourgeois revolution is an agrarian revolution—transfer of the ownership of land from the rent-receiving owner to the cultivator. The Bombay Plan completely ignores this crucial problem of Indian economy. It proposes to industrialise the country on the basis of the feudal *status quo*. In the nationalist *El Dorado* depicted in the Bombay Plan, the masses of the people will remain in the bondage of feudal relations, which constituted the foundation of colonial economy.

In the absence of an expanding internal market, industries to be built according to the Bombay Plan must count on foreign trade. That means competition with older industrial countries in the world market. Indian industrialists can hold their own in the competition with older rivals only by taking fullest advantage of cheap labour and cheap raw material. The execution of the Bombay Plan, therefore, will mean maintenance of the present low standard of living of the masses and even further depression of the level.

Is it not then clear that capitalism in India to-day cannot play the progressive role it played in Europe in an earlier period? Capitalism having thus exhausted its progressive possibilities, the class associated with capitalist production cannot be the leader of the overdue bourgeois revolution in India. But that class is the power behind nationalist politics. Therefore, the nationalist parties cannot promote the welfare of the people. Nationalism cannot be the ideology of the social revolution which alone can establish freedom for the people.

The history of the nationalist movement having corroborated this view of the Indian situation, theoretically held by its pioneers ever since 1920, the Radical Democratic party can legitimately and unchallengeably claim to be the sole champion of Indian freedom for the vast majority of her people.

The mobilisation of the masses under the banner of the Congress, in consequence of the widespread unrest during the years immediately following the last war, appeared to create the possibility of the Congress outgrowing the influence of vested interest, particularly, the nationalist bourgeoisie. However, it appeared to be worth trying to build up the people's party out of the mass movement under the banner of the Congress. If that attempt succeeded, then there might be no need to organise the Radical Democratic party. Because in that case the Congress would take its place. But just when a mass movement began to develop under the banner of the Congress, Gandhism became the

ideology of the nationalist movement. Gandhism has all along operated as a check upon the mass movement unfolding revolutionary possibilities.

I am not a new critic of Gandhism. I have never been a worshipper at the shrine of the Mahatma. I foresaw the reactionary role of Gandhism as soon as the Mahatma appeared on the Indian political scene. My views are recorded in the book 'India in Transition' written in 1921. The fact that the nationalist movement and even the nationalist bourgeoisie hailed the evangelist of revivalism as their Mahatma proved that Nationalism could not be the ideology of the social revolution required for the freedom of the Indian people, nor could the nationalist bourgeoisie lead the impending bourgeois revolution. Before an established social order can be liquidated to open up new channels of material and cultural progress, its traditional moral sanctions derived from superhuman authorities must be challenged. A philosophical revolution must precede any social revolution. Gandhi sought to reinforce the moral sanctions of the fossilised Indian society which bred servitude and degradation of common man. Gandhism is traditionalism and revivalism. As such, it is the avowed enemy of the historically necessary philosophical revolution. If the nationalist movement had any revolutionary potentialities, it could not possibly accept such a reactionary cult as its ideology.

Once the Congress accepted the cult of Gandhism, it could not possibly become the party of the people striving consciously for a social revolution. Nevertheless, the pioneers of the Radical Democratic party patiently tried for years to convert the Congress into a revolutionary party of the Indian people striving for democratic freedom and social liberation of the masses. That was a struggle for leadership. In course of time, out of an amorphous mass movement, the Congress crystallised as the political party not of the people, but of the upper classes, particularly of the bourgeoisie (merchants and industrialists).

Champions of people's freedom had no place in such a party. The leadership was impervious to mass pressure, nor could any such pressure be exerted. Because the Mahatma cult had prevented the growth of the least degree of political consciousness in the Congress membership. The semblance of national unity in the anti-imperialist struggle could no longer be maintained without prejudicing the cause of people's freedom. There could no longer be any doubt that the Congress did not want anything more than replacement of the white bureaucracy by a brown bureaucracy, and that again only to be manned by the wearers of a particular type of headgear. There could also be no doubt about the social character of the regime under the would-be brown bureaucracy. A foretaste of it was given by the Congress ministries in a number of provinces.

The struggle for the leadership could no longer be kept confined to the ideological plane. The Congress having become the party of the upper classes could not possibly be persuaded to adopt a socially revolutionary programme. Just when the crisis was coming to a head in consequence of the behaviour of Congress ministries, the underlying issue of progress versus reaction, democracy versus authoritarianism, modernism versus revivalism, science versus traditionalism, revolution versus counter-revolution, was brought into clear relief under the impact of the war.

The last world war ushered in a period of international civil conflict—a period of war and revolution. Capitalism as a world force had exhausted all its progressive possibilities. Further human progress required a reconstruction of the capitalist society on the solid foundation of the positive achievements of modern civilisation. The Russian Revolution started the process in that direction. The rise of Fascism was the reaction. Its avowed purpose was to destroy the forces of revolution, which had germinated within the capitalist society and were flourishing out of the decay and dissolution of that social order. As the achievements of modern civilisation—scientific, cultural, political—had made the impending social reconstruction not only possible but necessary, Fascism declared war on rationalism, scientific spirit, humanism, liberalism, individualism and democracy. It proposed to lead human society back to the pristine purity of mediaevalism. Faith was to replace reason, authority was to dethrone liberty; and the nation was to eclipse the individual.

By the time Fascism captured power in Germany, it became clear to the civilised world that, unless its mad march was checked, mankind would relapse in the darkness of mediaeval barbarism. Destruction of Fascism therefore was the paramount task of all champions of freedom and progress. Finally, when this war was precipitated by Fascist aggressiveness, they could possibly make no mistake in taking sides.

In India the pioneers of the Radical Democratic Party did not make any mistake. They advocated India's unconditional participation in the war against Fascism, with the argument that in a world enslaved by Fascism no country could be free or even have the chance of conducting the struggle for freedom. But, Indian Nationalism reacted differently to the international situation created by the war. Its attitude was determined by the doubtful dictum that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. The nationalists believed that the Axis Powers were going to win the war, and that the defeat of Britain would mean freedom for India.

Firstly, that was a wrong calculation of the possibilities of the international situation influenced by wishful thinking. Britain was caught unawares by the war. She was suddenly jolted out of the policy of appeasing Fascism pursued for fifteen years. It was doubtful whether America would come in the war. But understanding of the social and political issues which precipitated the war could not leave any doubt in the mind of the intelligent observers of the world situation that sooner or later the Soviet Union would participate in the war as the Enemy Number One of Nazi Germany. That certainly made the outcome of this war also certain. Therefore, belief in the power of the Fascist Axis to defeat the democratic world was only wishful thinking.

Secondly, the attitude to the war exposed that there was no relation between the nationalist goal of political independence and the cause of freedom for the Indian people. It should have been clear to the meanest intelligence that, if Britain was defeated by the Axis Powers, India would inevitably come under their domination. Assuming that India would be granted independence as an ally of the Axis Powers, she could have that privilege only by accepting their ideological domination. An independent India would be a Fascist India. One could easily imagine how the masses of the people would fare under such conditions. When these dangerous possibilities were pointed out to the nationalists, they would retort with amazing recklessness. Let the British go; we don't care what will happen afterwards. Nobody with the least appreciation of freedom could possibly take up such an attitude. But it was not recklessness. It was utter disregard for all the social and cultural values cherished by the modern civilised man. Assuming that the choice was between Imperialism and Fascism, nationalist India deliberately chose the latter. That was not an accident, not a rashness committed in the heat of the moment. The attitude towards the war was the logical consequence of the fact that Nationalism had never been motivated by the higher ideals of social emancipation and cultural progress. Its politics had no social content, no liberating significance. Race hatred was its only motive force. Therefore, in the most critical period of modern history, when the fate of mankind trembled in the balance, nationalist India pretended to be neutral, only waiting for the chance to join the camp of counter-revolution in this international civil war.

That is not an inference. In the first year of the war, we were still in the Congress. We knew from personal experience what Congressmen, high and low, with a few honourable exceptions, thought about the international situation, and on which side their sympathy lay. For the average Congressman, Hitler was the greatest man in the world, next only to Mahatma Gandhi. Hitler's autobiography was the most

widely read book among them. I have personally heard many Congressmen of influence and importance frankly declare that the Congress must be modelled on the National-Socialist Party of Germany, because only such a party could win independence for the country. It is common knowledge of you all how the news of daily German victories during the first two years of the war was hailed with joy by nationalist India. Even the fall of Paris was celebrated. The sentiment did not change even after the invasion of Russia. The fall of Moscow was hopefully expected by thousands in this country. The German defeat at Stalingrad was a disappointment. After all, the German liberators could not reach the frontiers of India. The Red Army stood on the way.

The Axis Powers could not win the war. They could not come to liberate India as expected by the nationalists. The miscalculation of the international relation of forces induced nationalist India represented by the Congress to commit a series of tactical blunders, which were bound to be the undoing of the nationalist movement, and particularly of the Congress.

Still inside the Congress, the pioneers of the Radical Democratic Party made strenuous efforts to prevent those fatal blunders. They made repeated appeals to the Congress leadership to act as practical politicians. If the greater issues involving the future of mankind did not carry any weight with them, they were urged to be guided by the practical consideration of seizing all the opportunities which were sure to be available during the course of the war. Had our advice been accepted, the nationalist parties and politicians would not be in the present quandary. Effective political power would have passed on to them in course of the war. I do not accuse them of having betrayed the cause of freedom; they never stood for that cause. They gambled their own chances away. During the most critical period, the nationalist leaders proved themselves to be impractical, short-sighted, inept and incompetent.

While the danger of Fascism threatened India from outside as well as from inside and all the existing political parties remained indifferent to the danger to the very chance of Indian freedom, organisational differentiation in the political movement became inevitable. The pioneers of the Radical Democratic Party could no longer remain in the Congress without betraying the ideals they had pursued ever since 1920. The Congress attitude towards the war, whatever might have been the immediate reason, precluded even the most remote possibility of the Congress outgrowing its reactionary leadership and becoming a revolutionary party of the people. The time was ripe to organise the Radical Democratic Party formally.

Its record of achievements during the short period of four years proves that it was the crying need of the situation. Nevertheless, initially, its task was to swim against the current of prejudice, mass hysteria among the middle class, and the appalling political backwardness of the people. It was abused, maligned, vilified. To stand for freedom, when the whole of mankind appeared to be doomed to servitude and degradation, was condemned as treachery. We were called agents of Imperialism, because we would not believe that India could be free in a world groaning under the iron heels of triumphant Fascist barbarism.

Those hectic days are past now. The Radical Democratic Party has survived the malicious attack of the entire nationalist India. At its very birth, it was put to a severe test. It has stood the test admirably. It could come out of that apparently unequal fight with flying colours, because though organisationally young and numerically still small, it was ideologically mature, drawing inspiration and courage of conviction from a twenty-five years tradition of scientific thought, theoretical clearness and political experience.

And, in the last analysis, the fight was not unequal. We were deficient in front line troops. But we had the advantage of a first rate officer corps and a vast reserve of man power. Our programme was bound to have an irresistible appeal to the overwhelming majority of the people—not only to the toiling masses, but also to the educated middle class, which is an integral part of the toiling masses. Ours is an appeal to reason and intelligence, and reason is bound to dispel prejudice born out of passion.

The present position of the Radical Democratic Party is unchallengeable, although our enemies will surely keep on attacking us and conspiring against us. They are powerful. They control all the agencies of publicity, and the money-bags of the country are at their disposal. But our cause is just, and we shall succeed.

Our view of the international situation has been corroborated by events. The political consequences of the war are unfolding as anticipated by us. Only blind prejudice can even now ignore that Britain will not survive this war as an Imperialist Power. To be convinced of that, one need only read the White Paper published by the British Government a month ago. Don't be obsessed by what Churchill said fifteen or twenty years ago. Figures speak a different language. Try to understand that language, and the future will look brighter.

As soon as the war broke out, we said that Britain was going to be revolutionised in consequence of it, if she was not to be overrun by Fascism. So, India's attitude towards the war was not to be determin-

ed by the choice between Fascism and Imperialism for, that would cease to be a choice. In the process of fighting Fascism, Britain was bound to shed Imperialism. Nationalist India wanted Britain to do so, but would not help the war which was bound to bring that about. The political vision of Nationalism was befogged by racial distrust. It was not capable of judging the dynamics of history.

This war will end both Fascism and British Imperialism. India will be confronted with a new choice, this time not an imaginary one. It will be the choice between Imperialist America and a Democratic Britain advancing towards Socialism. Nationalist India dominated by big business, with a distinct Fascist ambition, has already made the choice. It looks towards America for patronage and protection. The ghost of British Imperialism still haunts it. Will political independence from a Social-Democratic Britain, buttressed by American finance, mean freedom for the Indian people? That is the challenging question of the moment, which this Conference of the Radical Democratic Party puts to all thoughtful Indians for whom freedom is not just a word. The chain of gold will be more galling than political dependence, as far as the toiling masses are concerned. British Imperialism was an enemy of Indian freedom so long as it could bind India with a chain of gold. That chain has been broken by the war. Now Indian capitalists, those scheming patrons of Nationalism, were inviting America to cast over India a new net of gold.

Nationalist India to-day is weighed down under a sense of helplessness and frustration. It is the result of an incredible bungling by its leaders. To-day they are eager to do what they should have done four years ago. They are repeatedly holding up the olive branch. They would now accept the Cripps offer which they rejected disdainfully. But the Government no longer feels the need of appeasing them. The deadlock is not going to end until after the war. And there is no use blaming the British. The Congress leaders missed the bus. While they are still pleading for transfer of power, their patrons are actually acquiring power with the aid and connivance of Imperialism. What is happening in India to-day, corroborates another prognosis of the pioneers of the Radical Democratic Party about the future of Indian politics.

In 1928, I wrote a book with the title "The Future of Indian Politics". Pointing out the signs of the decline of Imperialism which had begun in consequence of the last world war, I anticipated decolonisation of India as far as the capitalists were concerned. There was a hue and cry against the heresy. Nevertheless, the process anticipated more than fifteen years ago is taking place under our very eyes. But

the heresy-hunters would still ignore facts and continue fighting a phantom. Engaged in this quixotic venture, they are actually helping the forces of counter-revolution. Despite the discomfiture of the Congress and the refusal of the Government to be lured by the olive branch held up by it, a National-Capitalist State is growing within the framework of the decaying Imperialist State. That is the basic feature of the present political situation. Whoever fails to take notice of it would be living in a world of unreality. Power is being transferred to Indians, but not to the Indian people. Big business is stepping in the shoes of the British rulers, and is planning to establish its dictatorship.

The ominous significance of the appointment of an author of the Bombay plan, the programme of Indian Fascism, in charge of the key department of Planning and Development of the Government of India should not be missed. The economic future of the country has been entrusted to Capitalism which, under the given Indian conditions, and in the context of the world situation, cannot possibly play any progressive role, and is therefore bound to degenerate into Fascism. On the pretext of not helping Imperialism, nationalist India would rather prefer a victory of Fascism. Now Imperialism is foisting a Fascist regime on India. Naturally, nationalist India is not alarmed by the danger. But it is a danger for the future of India as a whole, and particularly for the toiling masses.

Dalal's appointment is symbolical. It was not the appointment of one man. It meant partnership for a particular class. And that class favoured by dying Imperialism is the known patron of the nationalist movement, particularly the Congress. Because of the bungling by the Congress leaders, power cannot be constitutionally transferred to the Indian upper classes. Therefore, transfer of power is taking place surreptitiously—by the backdoor. It is a conspiracy against the people of India.

All independent economists have characterised the Bombay Plan as a design to establish the dictatorship of big business. We have called the spade a spade, and condemned the big business plan immediately on its publication as the programme of Indian Fascism. An author of that plan has become the maker of the economic policy of the Government. He has set up a Policy Committee, which is packed with the representatives of big business. The people will have no say in the making of their future.

Dalal's appointment does mean Government endorsing the Bombay Plan. We have repeatedly demanded that the Viceroy should make a reassuring public statement if that was not the meaning

of the appointment. He has kept a stony silence, which is eloquent. Another author of the Bombay Plan went to America and declared publicly that the Government had accepted the plan and appointed one of its authors to implement it. There was no repudiation from the side of the Government. We tried to elicit an official statement in this connection during the last session of the Central Assembly. But no elected representative of the people would raise the voice of the people. Or the Government would not allow such inconvenient questions to be raised in the Assembly. At the same time, parties which claim to hold the fate of the Indian people in the hollow of their hand, tacitly approved of the Government's endorsement of the programme of Indian Fascism.

Nor is it only one particular Department. The entire Government of India, still denounced as an Imperialist bureaucracy, is dominated by Indian big business, that stalwart patron of Nationalism. It is by now an open secret as to who created the food crisis. The goings-on in the Supply Department are a public scandal. The price control policy of the Department of Civil Supplies has only legalised profiteering. One can go over the whole machinery of the Government and find endless evidence to the effect that it has become an instrument to promote the greed and lust for power of big business.

These are alarm signals. The danger of Fascism which caused the organisation of the Radical Democratic Party four years ago, is still there for India. Indeed, it has grown greater. It is rising inside the country, with the aid and connivance of the established Government. Only that way Fascism can succeed. In India, conditions for its success seem to be maturing rapidly. Reactionary nationalism and decrepit Imperialism have made common cause against the freedom of the Indian people. Is it not an illusion to believe that the struggle for Indian freedom can still take place under the banner of Nationalism? It is a dangerous illusion.

The danger of Fascism in India has grown since the organisation of the Radical Democratic Party. But the Radical Democratic Party has also grown equal to measure up with the task of fighting the danger. The masses are rallying under its banner in an ever increasing number. The party claims the co-operation of the educated middle class, which has always been the backbone of the political movement. The educated middle class has no stake in the *status quo*. They are destined to supply the leadership of the social revolution which will establish freedom for the people. They should not deceive the destiny. Let them be no longer carried away by emotion; let them appreciate the nature of freedom and join the Radical Democratic Party to fight the last battles for it.

Don't run away with the idea that a National Government will put an end to all these mischiefs, and the future of India will be safe. This continuous agitation for a National Government is meant to divert public attention from the fact that power is actually passing to the Indian upper classes. Unthinking but honest fighters for freedom, who still have a lingering faith in the Congress, would be shocked out of that mental rut if they realised this ominous fact. The constitutional change according to the recognised right of self-determination is being delayed so that big business may be firmly placed in the saddle of power, able to reduce even the largest measure of political freedom to a mere formality.

But the perspective would not be less alarming, even if a National Government was constitutionally established immediately. A Government responsible to the present Central Legislative Assembly will be hailed by the Congress and the entire nationalist India as a National Government. But whom do these "elected representatives" demanding sovereign power really represent? A three percent minority. A Government responsible to a Legislature elected by a privileged minority will be inevitably controlled by the upper classes. Its function would be to defend the *status quo*, liquidation of which is the condition for any freedom of the Indian people.

It is an illusion to believe that this privileged minority, having wrested power with the help of the people, will pass it on to the people in the fulness of time. Such a vicarious offering has never been made in history. It will not be done in India. If the Congress and the other nationalist parties really want transfer to the people, why don't they demand re-election of the Assembly by universal suffrage? They want to inherit from the British rulers not only power, but the doctrine of trusteeship. This doctrine means denial of democracy. The result will be dictatorship.

The Radical Democratic Party alone advocates the sovereignty of the people without any reservation. Nor is it an academic declaration. The party has prescribed a practical procedure for the people to exercise their sovereign right. This Conference will place before the country a Draft Constitution of Free India. That will be a challenge to all who claim to be champions of Indian freedom.

The Radical Democratic Party never believed that freedom could come as a gift. But it does believe that for four years freedom has been within the reach of India. The nationalist leaders failed to grasp it. It is still there, but the upper classes are trying to usurp it. As the nationalist leaders also want to capture power for the upper classes, they will not oppose the usurpation. On the contrary, their demagoguery will exploit the blind sentiment of Nationalism to induce the people to hail a fraud as freedom.

The country has to make a choice. The choice is between a Capitalist National Government and a Radical Democratic People's Government. It is a choice between Fascism and Freedom. History placed this choice before India five years ago. The Radical Democratic Party rose out of that crisis to advocate the choice of freedom. To day the issues are sharper. The choice of freedom against Fascism can no longer lay one open to the malicious charge of helping Imperialism. To-day, dying Imperialism is seeking an alliance with rising Indian Fascism. That unholy alliance must be smashed if India is to be free. That is the task of those who even now will have the courage to make the right choice, and by virtue of doing so stand under the banner of the Radical Democratic Party—the only organised force fighting for real freedom.

Let us place the Draft Constitution of Free India before the people. Let it be endorsed by the elected representatives, not of a privileged minority, but of the people at large, in hundreds and thousands of people's Conventions. Let a National People's Convention provide the sanction of Democratic Will to the Charter of Democratic Freedom.

That is the only road to freedom. That road is open before the Indian people. The Radical Democratic Party has blazed the trail. Let all lovers of freedom fall in line to swell the grand army of freedom marching towards the goal with an irresistible power.

—Being the presidential address delivered at the Calcutta Conference.

MANIFESTO

Fellow-Fighters for Freedom !

For half a century you have been pursuing a goal which has receded farther the more the sacrifices you have made. Have you, then, been chasing a will-o-the-wisp ? No. Freedom is not an illusion. It can be attained. Only, the fighters for freedom must know concretely what they want. Then they can plan their activities, and advance towards the goal step by step.

Therefore, the experience of these years, which may have caused depression and despair, should induce you at least to ask yourself the question : What is freedom ? What are we fighting for ?

The bitter experience these years, bitter because we could not attain freedom when it was within our reach, proves that emotion alone is not enough. It must be reinforced with intelligence.

All this time, we have believed that India will be free as soon as the British rulers will go. You also believed that the British will be driven out if the country blindly followed the leaders. The country did that. What has been the result ? Only defeat after defeat, which has thrown you all in the present state of despair, depression and bitterness.

It won't help only to blame the British for this situation. Freedom can never come as a gift. Why should the British transfer

power to the Indians? Power has to be seized. This war presented a golden opportunity for India to do so. The leaders whom you blindly followed failed to do that. As impractical idealists, they gambled for more than was available and which would have enabled India to get more, and lost everything. Now they are ready to accept what was within their reach two years ago, and which they then rejected haughtily, hoping to get more as a gift. The present atmosphere of frustration is due to the bad leadership of the movement for freedom; and the bad leadership resulted from the fact that the movement was guided by emotion, and not intelligence. It was never clear about the nature of its object.

If this basic defect of the movement for freedom is not cured even now, greater disappointments are in store for you. Freedom as you conceived until now is a deceptive ideal. You will soon realize that replacement of the British rulers by any set of Indians will not establish freedom for the people, unless you will be prepared to help a fraud pass as freedom.

The Congress leaders bungled the situation in the most opportune moment. Due to their failure to act as practical farsighted statesmen, India missed the chance of being free. But the chance missed by the people owing to the mistake of their misleaders is now being misappropriated by the upper classes, who make no secret of the ambition to establish a dictatorial regime. And they are getting this chance of self-aggrandisement at the cost of the Indian people as a gift from dying Imperialism.

All honest fighters for freedom, therefore, are confronted with the question: Will a dictatorship of the upper classes mean freedom for the Indian people, simply because they profess Nationalism? You must realize that a "National Government" responsible to the present Central Assembly will be a dictatorship of the upper classes. The Assembly represents only three p. c. of the people. And such a fraudulent National Government is the demand of the Congress. If you still believe that to support that demand is patriotism, you are sure to be disappointed before long.

Because of the inability of the older parties to agree about the future of India, power cannot be passed to them constitutionally. But the transfer of power is taking place in fact. A *de facto* National Government has already been established. The Government of the country, in the Centre as well as in the provinces, is controlled by big business, which is the patron of the nationalist movement. The hated British bureaucracy to-day functions as the defender of Indian vested interest as against the welfare of the people. And the bureaucracy itself is very largely Indian. There are only three Englishmen on the Viceroy's Exe-

cutive Council. Don't run away with the idea that the Indian members are powerless. They have power enough. Only, they do not make use of it to promote popular welfare. Nor are they any less patriotic than other Indians. Only, patriotism, for them as well as for others, means not the desire to promote popular welfare, but to help the aggrandisement of vested interest which is identified with national interest.

The nationalist press, kept and controlled by big business and vested interests in general, deliberately confuses these realities of the present situation. Its function is to incite public passion against an imaginary enemy, so that the anti-democratic machinations of big business may pass as acts of patriotism.

If, obsessed with the phantom of British Imperialism, the fighters for freedom will still ignore the danger of Fascism, the cause of freedom will be placed in grave jeopardy. This war has blasted the foundation of British Imperialism. Britain can no longer keep India bound in a chain of gold. On the other hand, the U. S. A. has become a formidable imperialist power, indeed the only imperialist power in the post-war world. American businessmen want to capture the Indian market. In this situation, Britain must make the fullest concession to the Indian industrialists in order to prevent them from coming under the influence of American money-bags. Therefore, the Government of India pampers Indian big business, notwithstanding the fact that the latter is the patron of the Congress. Common interest creates the basis of an alliance between decrepit British Imperialism and aggressive Indian Capitalism. That alliance is building up a powerful anti-democratic front, which may eventually be reinforced by a "National Government" controlled by the upper classes.

The struggle for the freedom of the Indian people required the formation of a people's front as against the anti-democratic front. None of the older parties, therefore, can lead the struggle any longer. The people's front can be organised only by a people's party—a party standing unreservedly and unequivocally for people's freedom. And this is not a mere phrase—people's freedom requires a social revolution. Only by advocating a concretely formulated programme of radical social reconstruction, can a party claim to be the party of the people, deserving the support and allegiance of all true lovers of freedom.

The Radical Democratic Party is the party of the Indian people. Since its foundation four years ago, it has been building up a powerful people's front. During this short period, its membership has grown nearly to one lakh. Its influence on the toiling masses has grown rapidly. The Indian Federation of Labour with a total membership of half a million industrial workers is closely associated with the Radical

Democratic Party. The mass rally on the occasion of the Special Conference of the party at Jharia in the beginning of May 1944, was attended by 60,000 people. Public meetings organised by the party anywhere in the country are attended by thousands.

You may wonder why so very little news about these activities and growth of the people's party building up a powerful people's front appear in the press. We also want you to raise the question and find the answer to it. If you do so, with intellectual integrity, you will come face to face with the danger of Fascism rising behind the smoke-screen of nationalist demagogy, which can still easily sway the sentiments of a politically backward people. The nationalist press is the agency of propaganda and publicity of the anti-democratic front camouflaged as the nationalist movement. Controlled by big business, its function is to drug the popular mind with propaganda and publicity according to the slogan of "one nation, one party, one leader". Independent opinions and activities are denounced as anti-national, and all news about them suppressed. That is a typical Fascist practice. The press is the instrument for the regimentation of public opinion subservient to one party.

Nevertheless, swimming against the strong current of innumerable difficulties, the Radical Democratic Party has made a progress unprecedented in the political history of the country. Within a short period of four years, it has become a dominating political factor, challenging the professions of all other parties. The challenge has been thrown in the form of its programme. Any party which would not endorse this programme could not claim to stand for the freedom of the people.

The programme of the Radical Democratic Party, for the first time in the history of the political movement of the country, placed before the people a clear picture of their freedom. Its appeal is irresistible. Therefore, within the short period of four years, the Radical Democratic Party has been able to build up a sufficiently strong nucleus of the people's front.

Here is the programme of the Radical Democratic Party :

(1) Abolition of private property in land, which will be held only by actual cultivators on the payment of a tax not exceeding fifteen per cent. of the net produce; (2) Nationalisation of all natural resources; (3) Modernisation of the economic life of the country through rapid introduction of the modern mechanical means of production; (4) Public ownership of mining and mechanical transport, and State control of all

other heavy industries; (5) State financing of extensive public work and industrial undertakings for the productive employment of the huge mass of labour wasted to-day; (6) Minimum wages to guarantee an irreducible standard of living to all labouring in the fields, factories, mines, transport, offices and educational institutions; (7) Introduction of eight-hours working day and leave for one day a week and one month a year with full pay; (8) State guarantee of employment or relief for every willing worker; (9) Protection of public health and sanitation to be an important item of the State budget; a free medical-aid station in each village; (10) Free and compulsory secular education for all boys and girls upto the age of sixteen; (11) Constitutional guarantee for the freedom of press, speech and association; (12) Freedom of religion and worship; (13) Cultural autonomy; (14) Protection of minorities; (15) Equal rights and responsibilities of citizenship for men and women.

This programme was placed before the country by the Inaugural Conference of the Radical Democratic Party held four years ago. Since then the economic clauses of the programme have been worked out in detail in the People's Plan of Economic Development, submitted to the country by the Special Conference of the Party held in May 1944. The picture of political freedom outlined in the programme has now also been elaborated in the Draft Constitution of Free India, which has been placed before the country by the Second Conference of the Radical Democratic Party.

Fighters for freedom! The ideal you have been pursuing all these years is no longer vague. The programme of the Radical Democratic Party, as elaborated in the People's Plan of Economic Development and the Draft Constitution of Free India, puts a concrete content in it. If that is the freedom you want, then you must take up your place in the ranks of the Radical Democratic Party and help the formation of a powerful people's front under the banner of the party.

It is not enough to say that the British do not want to transfer power. All lovers of true freedom must also realise that the privileged Indian minority who wants to inherit power from the British rulers, will also not make a gift of freedom to the Indian people. Power is being transferred to them. But their patriotism will never go to the extent of passing it on to the people. The people must capture power, and that is the condition for people's freedom. Therefore, the Radical Democratic Party is opposed to a fraudulent National government controlled by vested interests and demands a people's Government.

We believe that is the demand of all lovers of freedom. Having for so many years pursued the ideal of freedom, and made incalculable

sacrifices in that pursuit, true lovers of freedom should not fail to see that the Radical Democratic Party alone champions economic and social liberation of the vast majority of the Indian people, and as such must be the rallying ground of all fighters for freedom. Therefore, we appeal to you to join the Radical Democratic Party and help the formation of the people's front to fight ~~the last~~ battles in the struggle for the freedom of the Indian people.

Calcutta,

December 30, 1944.

Being the manifesto issued by the Calcutta Conference.

RESOLUTIONS

On the Draft Constitution of Free India

The Inaugural Conference of the Radical Democratic Party, held in December 1940, formulated the Fundamental Principles of the Constitution of free India so as to embody the basic requirements of democratic freedom and social reconstruction necessary for promoting the material welfare and cultural progress of the Indian people. These Fundamental Principles were popularised by the Party throughout the country, and have been found to correspond to the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the population.

In view of the enthusiastic response which the Fundamental Principles have received and in view of their endorsement in hundreds of People's Conventions held in all parts of the country, a full text of the constitution of Free India has been prepared on the basis of these Fundamental Principles.

This All India Conference of the Party endorses the draft constitution as being in the best interest of the Indian people as a whole, and urges on the British Government to take early steps to promulgate this constitution in fulfilment of its pledge of full self-government to India after the war.

This Conference appeals to all political parties in India to similarly endorse the draft constitution so as to facilitate its promulgation.

This Conference believes that the best guarantee for the enforcement of this constitution is to secure a powerful and irresistible popular will in its support.

The Conference therefore directs all members and units of the Party to bring about the widest possible public discussion on the draft constitution and to organise popular support in its favour through People's Committees elected in all the towns and villages in the country.

On the Political Situation

While joyfully welcoming the resurgence of European Democracy in consequence of the defeat of the Axis Powers, this Conference of the Radical Democratic Party is alarmed by the perspective of Indian Democracy being deprived of the liberating consequences of this anti-Fascist war.

Nationalist India representing only the vocal upper class minority took up an attitude, in the darkest days of modern history, which implied a callous indifference to the outcome of the war. Now that the defeat of the Axis Powers is a foregone conclusion, erstwhile opponents of India's participation in the war are professing sympathy for the cause of the United Nations. The British Government seems to be taken in by the opportunism.

Although formal transfer of power to a privileged minority is delayed owing to the inability of the nationalist parties and politicians to agree about the division of the loaves and fishes of power, the Government of the country is rapidly coming under the *de facto* control and domination of Big Business. Those powerful patrons of the nationalist parties make no secret of their Fascist ambition. Nevertheless, Englishmen who still rule this country on the authority of British Democracy are ever ready to oblige those stalwarts of reaction. This policy amounts to aiding and abetting the rise of Fascism in India.

Representing the will of the Indian people and voicing the sentiments of the toiling millions, this Conference of the Radical Democratic Party deplores this policy of the Government, and resolves to oppose it by a maximum mobilisation of the progressive forces striving for democratic freedom.

The anxiety of decayed Imperialism to come to terms with the patrons of nationalism is not only antagonistic to the freedom and welfare of the Indian people, but it is harmful also for the British Democracy. Therefore, this Conference further resolves to strive for an active alliance between the peoples of the two countries to frustrate the policy of delivering the fate of Indian Democracy to the tender mercies of a privileged minority thirsting for dictatorial power.

Because a so-called National Government controlled by vested interests would not establish freedom for the Indian people, the Radical Democratic Party demands transfer of power to the masses, and the establishment of a People's Government—a government of the people, by the people. This Conference resolves to create irresistible sanction behind that democratic demand by mobilising the masses through People's Conventions.

The older parties having failed to agree, and in view of the demonstrated fact that they cannot agree without risking their very existence, the Radical Democratic Party has repeatedly demanded reconstruction of the Viceroy's Executive Council into a provisional Government composed of men committed to clearly formulated principles of democratic freedom, and to give the Indian people the opportunity of framing a Constitution of the country on the basis of those principles. This Conference endorses that demand, and deplores the Viceroy's failure to adopt proposed democratic procedure.

This Conference declares that the Radical Democratic Party is competent in co-operation with other progressive elements, to form such a provisional Government as the instrument of the transfer of power to the Indian people and the establishment of a People's Government.

The Conference finally resolves that the Central Political Council of the Party will on the basis of this resolution write a letter to the British Labour Party and address an appeal to the British Democracy as a whole.

On Immediate Tasks of the Party

The analysis of the political situation in the country to-day presents before the Party two major tasks:—

Firstly, to combat and frustrate the designs of native vested interests to seize power for themselves; and

Secondly, to create irresistible popular sanction behind the demand for transfer of power to the Indian People. The accomplishment of these two tasks depends upon maximum political mobilisation of the Indian people and organisation of their political instrument within the crucial period of the coming one year. The recent political events in our country have amply demonstrated that the future of the Indian people depends on the success of the Radical Democratic Party. This Conference, therefore, urges upon every member of the Party to make supreme efforts to fulfil the above tasks within this short period and lead India to freedom.

The draft constitution of free India proposed by this Conference is the most fundamental political document ever presented before the people in the political life of the country, giving a concrete definition of India's aspiration. The Party shall undertake to popularise this draft constitution throughout the country as the most effective method of political education and mobilisation of the people.

On the basis of this extensive political education of the people the Party shall organise People's conventions throughout the country in every district, to endorse the Draft Constitution and its fundamental principles. These conventions shall elect People's Committees on local, district and provincial scales as outlined by the Lucknow Conference of the Party. The Party shall aim at holding the National Convention of the people's representatives of the whole country by the close of 1945 to express and represent the organised will and sanction of the Indian people. This shall be considered as the central task before the Party in the coming year.

In undertaking the above task, the Party should conduct specialised propaganda and spread itself among the rural masses, industrial workers and the educated middle class. In all these sections direct propaganda of the Party must be made, so that the necessity of the Party for attaining India's freedom, its name, its symbols and its programme will become familiar to the people for ultimately it is the Party which is the political instrument in the hands of the people on which they will have to rely.

Special attention must be given to work among industrial labour and trade unions. The success of our work in this section of the people through the Indian Federation of Labour has unnerved the enemies of Indian Democracy. The Party must, therefore, apply itself to building up the Indian Federation of Labour as the only representative central organisation of workers, in which they shall have fullest confidence and from which they will seek guidance in the testful days to come. Such a participation in the Trade Union movement should give the Party a large membership as well as an active cadre of workers.

The organisation of the Peoples' Guards as a vigilant militant body conducting demonstrative and impressive propaganda for the Party must be undertaken on a large scale in all parts of the country. Every Party unit must have a body of Peoples' Guards attached to it.

The Party should also organise auxiliary and feeder organisations—such as the Renaissance Clubs, Radical Students' Unions, Womens' Clubs, Social Clubs etc.—essentially with a view to make the Party and its programme known to increasingly larger circles.

Building up a large Party fund will be one of the necessary steps to be taken to discharge effectively the responsibility of the Party. Therefore the Party shall undertake to initiate a vigorous drive for the collection of the Party fund, which will also provide an index of the popularity of the Party among the people.

All this work can be accomplished only when the Party as a whole is strengthened at a rapid rate in all its aspects. The membership must continually be doubling itself. Party units must be organised in every district and sub-division with efficiently functioning Party offices.

- The necessary continuous process of political absorption and organisation of elements attracted by the propaganda of the Party among the people, can be accomplished by laying greater emphasis in two directions. Firstly, the provincial and district offices together with the available active cadre of the Party must function more efficiently. Secondly, by placing new and fresh local elements, thrown up in active work, into positions of responsibility. These elements integrated together should provide the local leadership, whose qualitative as well as quantitative growth serves as the true index of the strength and growth of a real political party of the people.

Participation in the election to local bodies provides a first class opportunity to popularise the Party. In addition, it gives practical training and experience to Party members in conducting the elections. The Party therefore should participate in such elections as far as possible so that it may utilise in full the opportunity of increasing itself in number, quality and efficiency.

Production and distribution of specialised propaganda literature both in English and Vernaculars must be undertaken in order to drive home our propaganda among the educated middle class and students. At least 2000 annual subscribers of Independent India must be enrolled by the end of February 1945.

Thus, concretely the targets for the Party to be attended in one year are as follows :—

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|---|--------------|
| 1. Party membership | 3 lacs. |
| 2. Party Fund | Rs. 3 lacs. |
| 3. Peoples' Guards | 50 thousand, |
| 4. Indian Federation of Labour membership | 10 lacs. |
| 5. Holding the National Peoples' Convention at the end of the year. | |

“THIS CHARTER OF FREEDOM”

By V. M. Tarkunde

This resolution expresses the endorsement by the entire Party of the draft Constitution of India prepared by Com. Roy at the request of the Central Secretariat of the Party and adopted by the latter after a very thorough and careful consideration. The resolution expresses the view that this draft Constitution is in the interest of the over-whelming majority of the Indian people, and therefore it demands that the British Parliament, in fulfilment of the pledge of full self-government which it has repeatedly given to the Indian people, should accept and sanction this Constitution. The resolution appeals to other political parties in India to endorse the provisions of this draft so as to facilitate its promulgation. The resolution, however, makes it clear that, in the ultimate analysis, the guarantee for such a Constitution coming into effect is the sanction of popular will which it may evoke in the country. After all, the political advance of the Indian people does not depend either upon the reasonableness of any political party or upon the sweet will of the British Government. If this Constitution gets the support of an irresistible and well-organised popular will, those Parties which would oppose it will wither away, and the British power will either consent to sanction this Constitution or the Indian people will proceed to elect their own Constituent Assembly for its promulgation. The resolution, therefore, directs that the Party, having endorsed this Constitution, should explain it to the people and organise a powerful popular sanction for its enforcement.

We have repeatedly pointed out that the main cause of the futility and frustration of our political strivings must be traced to the fact that all the major political movements which arose and developed in the country so far have been of a purely negative character. This is evidenced by the peculiar feature of our politics that all the major political parties have consistently refrained from defining the positive social content of the freedom that they want, except in very vague and ambiguous terms. This is not an accident, for this negative attitude is inevitably associated with the very basis on which these parties were founded and have grown. They have been founded on the sentiment of either racial nationalism or communalism. That being the case, it was natural that the upper classes, who dominate the economic life of society, should dominate the political life of these parties as well. To attempt to put a positive social content in their political ideal would bring them into a clash with their propertied patrons. They have naturally refrained from doing so. We, on the other hand, have always believed that politics is not worth while unless it is to promote the happiness and welfare of the vast majority of the people. The greatest good of the greatest number, has always been the basic inspiration of our Party. From the time of its inception, the positive programme of the Party, with all its essential political, economic, and social aspects, was always clearly defined. We believe, and that belief has been confirmed by experience, that a positive programme embodying the pressing socio-economic needs of the masses belonging to all communities would enable us to build up a powerful progressive movement in the country, and to avoid the internal dissension and ultimate defeat which are inherent in a racial or communal approach to politics.

Accordingly, on the basis of our programme, we formulated more than two years ago the fundamental principles which ought to be incorporated in the Constitution of a free India, and which would provide the rallying ground for the democratic and progressive elements from all communities. At the Lucknow Conference we resolved to popularise these principles and to organise Peoples' Committees on that basis. The work done in this direction has convinced us that these fundamental principles express the basic urge of the vast majority of the Indian people. Having received that assurance from our experience, we have proceeded to draw a fuller picture of the Swaraj which the people need and for which they must strive. The present draft Constitution is that fuller picture of Swaraj.

This draft Constitution, however, has also been prepared in response to a more pressing and urgent need than that of making a fuller and more concrete presentation of our ideal of freedom. The Government of India Act of 1935 has broken down and a new Constitution must take its place within a short period after the war. The

present political stalemate cannot continue indefinitely. The major political parties in the country have already demonstrated their inability to agree amongst themselves either about the nature of the Constitution or about the method of its enforcement. On the other hand, the British Government, having received nothing but condemnation for the initiative which they took in the past have declared that the initiative must now be taken by the Indian people themselves. The vicious circle of political frustration is thus complete. Moreover, even if the major political parties could come to some sort of understanding amongst themselves, they are bound to evolve a kind of constitution which will mean some superficial changes in the governance of the people, without providing for the political, economic and social needs and requirements of the over-whelming majority of the people. On the other hand, if no such agreement takes place—and it is more than likely that it will not take place—the British Government will have ultimately to impose a Constitution on this country, for the present unconstitutional regime cannot drag on for an indefinite period. If the British Government imposes a constitution in India, all the political parties who had been unable to evolve a constitution for the country will eagerly come forward to condemn the British-made Constitution. As in the past, they will demonstrate their patriotism by entering the Legislatures for wrecking the new constitution, and the politics of futility which we experienced in the pre-war years will be witnessed all over again. We have prepared this draft Constitution as a solution of the political deadlock and as an alternative to the politics of negation. Our object is not only to place before the people and the British Government a Constitution that embodies the demands and aspirations of the vast majority of the Indian people, but also to forestall any attempt from any quarter, native or foreign, to foist on our people a Constitution which will merely serve the anti-social interests of the propertied classes.

You must have noticed that the draft which has been placed before you for your endorsement is a Constitution and not a Government of India Act. In other words, it deals with all the fundamental laws about the political organisation of the new social order which we desire to build up in this country, leaving minor details to be filled in by legislation under the Constitution. As an outline of fundamental laws, our draft is complete. If it is accepted as such, no difficulty will be experienced in providing the details at a later stage.

You will further note that this draft is not being presented as a final blue print in which no alterations can be entertained. After endorsing this draft, we shall organize the maximum public discussion on its merits, and if we find in the course of experience that any changes, require to be made, we shall certainly incorporate those changes,

provided they are consistent with our fundamental principles.

The fundamental and outstanding feature of our draft Constitution is that it seeks to overcome the limitations of Parliamentary Democracy which made the principle of self-rule to appear a sham and which facilitated the establishment of Fascism in a number of European and Asiatic countries. These limitations have been two-fold. It has been found that political equality cannot be realised on the basis of economic inequality, particularly when the latter is associated with the existence of classes with conflicting economic interests. Political freedom is inconsistent with economic slavery. A rule of the people and by the people is possible only when the people can act as free agents and not as mere tools of a privileged minority. Hence, in order to prevent democracy from being turned into a fraud, a genuinely democratic Constitution must define the basic laws governing the ownership of property. A Constitution which keeps the present property relation untouched will only be an instrument for the preservation of the status quo. It will merely set up a purely Indian bureaucracy in the place of the semi-Indian bureaucracy to govern the Indian people, who will continue to remain in the present condition of economic and political slavery. We feel that there is no justification in drafting a new Constitution for India except to satisfy the urge of the Indian people to erect a new and progressive social structure in the country. Any Constitution which is based on the status quo will be a bond of slavery and not a charter of freedom.

The second limitation of Parliamentary Democracy arises from the fact that it retains the primary voters in an unorganised and atomised condition, so that they are unable to make any effective use of the sovereign power which is supposed to reside in them. They are unable to participate in the governance of the country, or even to control the legislative functions of their representatives. The executive machinery of the state is almost wholly beyond popular control. Parliamentary Democracy is not a democracy in the sense of self-rule; it is not even a fully responsible government. It is a rule, not of the people, but for the people by representatives who legislate on behalf of the people and by an executive, which functions on behalf of the legislators. The executive, being theoretically responsible to the legislature which is theoretically responsible to the electorate, remains doubly removed from the people and therefore beyond popular control and the legislature is only partially responsible to the people by virtue of their right to elect their representatives once in a few years. In order to make democracy a reality, the primary voters must be organised, and this organised electorate must be enabled to exercise its sovereign power by constant and direct control over both the legislative and the executive functions of the State.

In this draft Constitution, we have embodied provisions calculated to overcome both these limitations of Parliamentary Democracy. These provisions must be regarded as the fundamental features of our Constitution.

With a view to introduce economic freedom as the basis of political liberty, and in order to lay down the foundation of a new and progressive social structure, the draft Constitution declares that all land, under-ground riches, and railways belong to the people as a whole. It directs that the governments set up under this Constitution shall complete the transaction of the transfer of ownership within one year of their coming into existence by paying a fair compensation, which has been estimated at seven times the net average yearly income. The compensation shall be given in self-redeeming three per cent. bonds of the State Bank payable for forty years. The Constitution further provides for the control of private investment, and the right of the State to fix prices, wages and working conditions. It declares that goods will be produced primarily for satisfying the requirements of the people, and provides that the entire agricultural and industrial production and distribution shall be planned with that purpose. It authorises the State to launch large-scale industries under State ownership and to include their finances in the annual budget. In short, the Constitution provides for all the fundamental requirements which will enable a plan like the People's Plan of Economic Development, which our Party has already adopted, to be put into effect. There can be little doubt that if the economic life of our society is planned on that basis, we shall attain within a few years a material and cultural level unheard of in the whole history of our country.

The second limitation of Parliamentary Democracy described above has been overcome in our Constitution by accepting and elaborating the principle which has been enunciated in the Constitution itself that "the foundation of the State is *organised democracy*." All the primary voters—and let it be remembered that the entire adult population of India will be enfranchised by this Constitution—will be organised under local People's Committees, which will have the sovereign right of controlling the State machinery in its legislative as well as executive functions. These People's Committees will nominate candidates for election to the provincial and federal legislatures. They will give constant expression to the will of the people for the guidance of their representatives. They will discuss provincial and federal legislation and will have the right to initiate provincial and Federal laws. They will have the authority to recall their representatives and also to recall the Provincial Governors and the Governor General, who under the Constitution will be elected by the people themselves.

The demand for adult franchise has often been opposed on the ground of the vastness of the country and the illiteracy of the people. But for one thing, political education has never been associated with the ownership of property, nor exclusively with the learning in schools and colleges. Property and education are to-day the monopoly of the upper classes whose interests are antagonistic in the majority of cases with the interests of the masses. Our Party, as a People's Party, has championed the demand for adult franchise. This Constitution, seeks to remove all the objections that can be taken to adult franchise. It provides for the constant self-education of the masses. It would enable them by the frequent discussion in the People's Committees, to participate intelligently in the governance of the country and thus to make the ideal of democracy a reality. The Constitution provides political education to the wielders of supreme sovereignty.

Having considered the two fundamental features of this Constitution, let us turn to the main controversial issues that have been faced and tackled in this draft. The main issue is, ofcourse, about the demands of the minorities and the claim of the Muslim League to separate homeland for the Muslim population.

With regard to the claims of the minorities as such, this Constitution provides that their rights must be protected by proportional representation to all elected bodies through separate electorates. This is no departure from our policy, for you will remember that, when we were in the Congress, we had advocated separate electorates for the minorities. We recognise, as realists, that our people are not socially homogeneous, that communal feelings divide them into a number of categories, and that in this situation the minorities must have the right to demand separate electorates, so that they may be able to elect their own representatives without any interference from or domination of the majority community. It is obvious that, in a system of joint electorates, the majority community is in a position to decide which candidates from the minorities shall succeed in the elections. That will be manifestly unjust.

It is often assumed by those who learn their politics from the catch phrases of the nationalist press that the system of separate electorates has accentuated the communal disharmony in the country. In fact, it can be easily seen that the very refusal of the nationalist leaders to accept the demand for separate electorates has accentuated communal differences. For, to refuse this legitimate demand amounts to a desire that the majority community should continue to dominate the minorities. This attitude of the nationalist leaders has naturally increased the insistence as well as the justification for the demand of separate electorates. An openhearted acceptance of the demand must

result in reducing inter-communal suspicion. The demand, moreover, is by no means inconsistent with democracy; for there is no reason why the minorities would not elect progressive-minded representatives through their own electorates.

The main issue, which is the centre of current political controversy, is the Muslim demand for Pakistan. That issue is squarely tackled in this Constitution. In effect we say to the Muslim leaders—"what sort of homeland do you demand for the Muslim people? Do you agree that full and unfettered democracy shall prevail in the Pakistan area? Do you accept the principle that land shall belong to the Muslim and Hindu peasants, and not to the landlord whether he be a Hindu or a Muslim? Do you accept that trade and industry should be controlled by, and increasingly owned by, the Muslim and Hindu masses and not by the Muslim and Hindu commercial and industrial magnates? In other words, are you demanding Pakistan for the Muslim masses? If you are, we support your demand and our draft Constitution will enable you to realise it." In other words, we have adopted, in drafting this Constitution, a purely democratic approach to the communal problem. We have allowed the fullest freedom to the Muslims to form a separate State or States, provided that the freedom amounts to the freedom of the Muslim people and not of those who thrive on their exploitation. I am sure this approach will be regarded by all progressive Muslims as entirely satisfactory.

This approach ought to satisfy all the progressive elements from the Hindus as well. They should realise that we cannot try to retain a large section of the population under one State against its will. Any such attempt will result in greater communal friction and a keener desire to separate. Unity must be voluntary; any attempt to enforce it will result in greater disunity. Instead of trying to do anything so obviously irrational, let us try to build up a more happy, advanced and prosperous country, so that the Hindus and Muslims may find it worth while to stay together under one State or, if they find it more convenient, to live in adjoining States as good neighbours.

Let us now proceed to see how these principles are embodied in the draft Constitution. The draft is preceded by a Bill of Succession which provides for a transitional Provisional Government as the agency for the promulgation of the Constitution. The provisional Government which will resign when the Constitution is fully promulgated, will in the first place re-constitute Indian provinces on the basis of linguistic and cultural homogeneity and in accordance with administrative convenience. It will then introduce full democracy in all these Provinces by conducting the elections of People's Committees, and by getting the Provincial Governors elected on the basis of universal adult franchise.

The newly elected provincial People's Councils will have the right to entertain a proposal to the effect that the province concerned shall remain outside the proposed Federal Union of India. If the proposal is passed by a majority vote in the Provincial People's Council, it will be referred to the entire electorate of the province concerned. The referendum will be conducted by the newly formed executive Government of the Province, and the proposal will be effective if it is sanctioned by a majority of provincial voters. Thereafter, the Provisional Government will proceed to form the federal Union of India of such provinces as have not decided to remain outside the Union. It may be noted that even those Provinces which decide to form the Federal union of India will retain their inherent right to secede from the Federation at any time in the future with the sanction of a provincial referendum. The Provinces will thus have the option either to remain outside the Federation initially or to postpone the question of secession till after they get some experience of the functioning of the Federal Union.

These provisions together offer a democratic solution of the communal problem. A question, however, is often raised:—Is it consistent with the principles of Radical Democracy to make concessions in this manner to the communal feelings of our people, which are after all an expression of their cultural backwardness and superstition? Why not totally neglect these communal antagonisms and prepare a Constitution merely embodying the principles of the economic and political reconstruction of society? The answer is that such a course would be totally unrealistic and, therefore, irrational. It is true that the communal differences in the country are a sign of our backwardness. But that backwardness is itself the result of the medieval mode of production which prevails in India. So long as the bulk of our people continue to work with primitive tools and remain the economic slaves of landlords and usurers, the cultural backwardness of the country as a whole cannot be removed. A revolutionary transformation of society, which has been visualised by this Constitution, will guarantee the material as well as cultural progress of the Indian people, and will consequently undermine the basis of communal differences. But a Constitution like this cannot be enforced except on the foundation of communal unity—a unity of the people if not of their present leaders—and such a unity cannot be built up without a realistic appreciation of the present communal antagonism. To refuse to take measures for removing the existing fears of communal minorities on the spacious ground of democracy is like placing the cart before the horse. Realising that communal feelings are bound to prevail so long as the present social structure prevails, our present objective must be to devise a solution to ensure that the movement for the revolutionary transformation of the social structure will not be

hampered by communal differences. Hence, while sponsoring the economic and political demands of the masses belonging to all communities, our draft Constitution also embodies the provisions necessary for neutralising communal fears. It thus ensures that the democratic progress of the Indian people will no longer be hampered by communal differences. Socially and economically, India lives in the 16th or 17th century. Our Constitution is designed to lead the country out of the backwaters of history and place it in the front rank of progressive nations.

The second controversial issue is about the future of Indian States. It will be readily conceded that a Constitution of Free India must embrace all the Indian people including the present inhabitants of Indian States. To allow the States' people to remain under reactionary autocratic regimes, while providing a highly progressive democratic constitution for the rest of India, would not only be highly unjust to the States people but also detrimental to the interests of the rest of the country. If the Indian States are allowed to remain as islands of reaction in the midst of a democratic society, they will be a perpetual drag on the progress of the latter. On the other hand, the Indian States, ruled as they are, cannot be federated with other democratic Indian Provinces. Such a Federation between democracy and autocracy is bound to be harmful to the future of the Indian people as a whole. In the context of a democratic Constitution for India, the problem of Indian States can be solved only by accepting the principle of uniform democracy for the country as a whole.

It is sometimes suggested that the Indian Princes should be made to occupy the position of Constitutional monarchs. On principle, we are not much opposed to that idea. For, we believe in securing the substance and not the form. If, however, you give a little more thought to the problem, you will find that the Princely Order cannot be fitted into a Federal structure which any democratic Constitution must envisage for India. The Federal Union will necessarily be a Republic. To be the constitutional monarchs of some of the federated provinces, while the Federation will itself be a Republic, is scarcely consistent with the dignity of the Princes themselves. Secondly, the States people are culturally and linguistically indistinguishable from the residents of neighbouring provinces, and there is no justification in keeping them in separate constituent units of the Federation. Furthermore, the States vary so greatly in size, and many of them are so small and insignificant, that it is impossible to federate them on any basis of equality with major provinces like Bombay or Madras.

This means that the Princely Order must go. Our draft is based on the assumption that, before this Constitution is enforced, the British

Government shall have concluded bilateral agreements with Indian Princes, by virtue of which the latter shall have surrendered their rights of governance over the State territories and some monetary allowance payable for a stated period shall have been fixed for them. The existence of the Princely Order is totally inconsistent with the spirit of modern times. Sooner or later, it has to vanish. We have suggested a method by which it can be liquidated in a manner beneficial to all concerned. The British Government is undoubtedly in a position to follow the procedure suggested by us. The Indian Princes do not possess any independent power which may enable them to reject the proposals made by the British Government. That being the case, the excuse which is often put forward by some British statesmen that the "treaty rights" of the Princes must be regarded as sacrosanct is only a device calculated to hinder the progress of the Indian people. Even legally, the British power has always been in a position to disregard these treaty rights by exercise of the principle of "paramountcy." For once that principle must be practised for the benefit of the people and in fulfilment of the pledge of full self-government given by British spokesmen.

It is impossible to deal in the course of a single lecture with all the important provisions of the draft Constitution. However, I feel it necessary to draw your attention to two other features of the Constitution. You will notice that the supreme authority in the Federal Union of India will be the Supreme People's Council, composed of the elected Governor General, the Council of State and the Federal Assembly. In defining the relative authority of the Federal Government and the Governments of Federated Provinces, the Constitution seeks to secure the advantages of Centralism without giving up the basic requirements of Federalism. A purely Federal structure is necessarily weak and inefficient in the discharge of the legislative and executive functions of the State. Our draft overcomes this deficiency. While certain subjects, like defence, foreign relations, currency, etc. have been listed as federal subjects, the Federal Legislature has been empowered to make laws regarding other subjects as well. The laws on these non-federal subjects require the consent of provincial legislatures, but in cases of dispute between the centre and any of the provinces, the entire federal electorate has been given the final authority to decide the question and to overrule if necessary the objection of the federated Province. The undoubted benefits of Centralism have thus been secured, while the autonomy of Provinces is recognised by safeguarding their inherent right to secede from the Federation.

Another novel feature, which is bound to interest middle-class intellectuals, relates to the composition of the Council of State. It will be composed mainly of economists, engineers, scientists, medical

men, jurists, historians, and persons who have made outstanding contributions to modern thought in philosophy and the social sciences. In this Council of State is vested the power of planning the development of the different branches of society, including its economic, educational, and cultural progress. The talent of middle-class intellectuals, which to-day is for the most part purchased by the upper classes and which therefore serves the cause of reaction, will under our Constitution get a splendid opportunity to help in promoting the progress of India's millions.

The method visualised in our draft for the transfer of power requires some explanation. To-day the British Parliament is the ultimate authority for the governance of India. Supposing that the British Parliament is willing to transfer power to the Indian people in the post-war period, the function of promulgating the Constitution of Free India must be entrusted to a Provisional Government. Since the British Parliament remains the supreme legal authority till the Constitution of Free India is promulgated, the Provisional Government will have to be responsible to the British Parliament. To suggest that the Provisional Government should be responsible to the present Legislative Assembly amounts to the demand that sovereign power should be transferred to the Indian upper classes who form the electorate of the Legislative Assembly. The Provisional Government must be composed of men willing and able to enforce the revolutionary provisions of the Constitution and not of those who are the henchmen of native reaction. Nor can the Muslim fear of a Hindu majority be neutralised by setting up a Provisional Government responsible to an elected Indian body. The draft Constitution, therefore, makes it clear that the Provisional Government, during the limited period of its existence will remain responsible to the British Parliament and not to an Indian elected assembly. Any other proposal with regard to the nature of the Provisional Government will either place the destiny of the Indian people into the hands of the upper classes, or else result in setting up a machinery incapable of solving the communal problem.

The enforcement of the Constitution, however, does not depend upon the sweet will of the British Government or the British Parliament. A powerful and organised popular support is the only sanction for its enforcement. Once this sanction is created, the Constitution will be put into effect, irrespective of whether the British Government accepts it or not. On the other hand, in the absence of this sanction, even the British Government will be unable to enforce such a revolutionary Constitution in our country. Let us, therefore, go with this document which is the charter of India's freedom, to every man and woman in India and secure popular support for our cause which is

also the cause of the people. Let us organise the supporters of this charter of freedom into People's Committees on a local, district, and provincial scale, leading ultimately to a National Convention. That is the way to India's freedom.

In making this appeal to you and to the entire membership of our Party, I must point out the extreme urgency of the present situation. To-day the middle-class, which remains the most vital factor in Indian politics, feels defeated and frustrated. It feels that it has tried everything to attain freedom and has failed utterly. It does not see any way through the gathering darkness. This is the time when the people can be told that they should follow one leader and join one Party and all their problems will be solved. This typically Fascist appeal always finds a favourable response in periods of frustration and humiliation. The appeal "One Leader, One Party, One Programme" which has been issued by responsible Congress leaders shows which way things are developing in our country. We must do everything necessary to change this atmosphere of futility and demoralisation. We shall go and tell the people that they cannot possibly be free by blindly following this leader or that. We shall appeal to them to rely upon themselves to regard themselves as the makers of their destiny and the arbiters of their future. We shall place before them this glorious charter of freedom, and appeal to their self-respect, to their manliness. Our appeal is bound to succeed. Thus will the Radical Democratic Party fulfill its noble ideal of leading the Indian people to the goal of freedom and progress.

—Being the speech delivered at The Calcutta Conference while moving the resolution on The Draft Constitution

A MASTERPIECE OF SOCIAL ENGINEERING

By : G. D. Parikh.

The Constitution which has been placed before you for your approval embodies the needs, the hopes and the aspirations of a vast majority of the people in this country. It shows the way in which they can come into their own, remodel their collective existence on healthy and harmonious foundations and take into their hands the power to shape it in the future. As such, this document is unique in the political history of our country, unique in its approach to the problem of our political life, unique in the remedies which it suggests in order to solve it. There have been previously some attempts to prepare a constitution for this country. There are attempts going on at present and perhaps these may continue in the future also, but none of these so far can be said to have given proper attention to both the construction of a genuinely democratic political apparatus as well as the creation of a congenial socio-economic atmosphere in the midst of which alone that apparatus can function successfully. That is the distinction of this Constitution and that will remain its distinction when all this tall talk and the hectic efforts that are going on all around us for preparing the future Constitution of India, have come to an end.

There is a considerable amount of misunderstanding in our country concerning the term, "Constitution." We have had the Government

of India Act of 1935, which is often described as a Constitution. We had, and partly continue to have even to-day, the earlier Act of 1919, which is also referred to as a Constitution. The term thus has generally come to mean a document describing the administrative machinery of the Government. The central point pertaining to all these documents so far has been the division of political power between the foreign rulers of this country and the elected representatives of a small fraction of the Indian community. This division used to be effected and revised from time to time, and there were quarrels, disputes and fights about it, but underneath all these quarrels, or fights existed a general agreement between both concerning the fundamentals on which the existing socio-economic frame-work is founded and within the limits set up by which, the power possessed by this or that section is to be exercised. In other words, all the demands of the opponents of the foreign rule have been demands for greater and greater share in the power all their politics has been power politics. It may have recently assumed a more challenging tone or developed into a demand for complete power, but a demand for power is different from a demand for freedom. The distinction of this Draft Constitution is that it embodies the demand for freedom and not a mere demand for power.

We do not, therefore, consider the various arrangements arrived at between the Indian and the British masters of the Indian people as constitutions. A constitution is not merely a legal document. It is a piece of social engineering. It lays down the fundamental law of a new society. The force at the disposal of the political authority in the new society is expected to furnish the necessary sanction behind that law but it must be a new society. It must be a new state which the constitution creates. It is because of this that we cannot call documents describing the administrative machinery of the Government as constitutions. A constitution is created by the people who feel the irresistible urge to remodel their collective existence; that urge finds in it a concrete expression. It is with this revolutionary approach to the problem of the future constitution of free India that the present draft has been prepared and we all feel legitimately proud of the fact that we have the good fortune of having it prepared by one of the greatest social engineers of all times, Comrade M. N. Roy.

One need not be terrified by the term "revolutionary". In fact I have used it advisedly. The term does not and cannot frighten any jurist though it may appear frightening to constitutional lawyers with a narrower outlook. As a matter of fact, all the well-known constitutions of the world were prepared and enforced actually in the midst of revolutions or under threats of revolutions. Even the history of the British constitution, which is said to have developed gradually and

peacefully "from precedent to precedent" will testify to this fact. Revolution need not mean violence. It is not the same thing as chaos, disorder or disturbances. It is simply a remodelling of the fundamentals of the social order and our draft asserts that such a remodelling is an imperative necessity in our country.

This assertion is again not quite new. The demand for power voiced forth by the representatives of a vocal minority of our people found its expression in the slogan for a National Government. We have all along criticised that slogan. We have pointed out that national freedom is not identical with the freedom of the downtrodden in the nation but may even be its exact opposite. National freedom may be an instrument for people's slavery. In fact this need not be taken on our authority. One of the high priests of Indian nationalism said in the hectic days of August 1942 while replying to an objection to the "Quit India" demand of the Congress "You ask us how shall we quit? To whom shall we hand over power? I say hand it over to anybody. Hand it over to the Muslims, hand it over to the Indian thieves, dacoits or robbers and get out." That, in essence, is the implication of National Government. The basis of that demand is that a Government by any Indian is better than Government by any Englishman. There exactly stood nationalism in its naked form of racial animosity. We have never believed in that slogan but have, on the other hand, consistently demanded a People's Government as a substitute for the present Government. Lest that term "Government" might mislead anybody, let me further make it clear that the demand for People's Government actually means the demand for People's State. A People's State cannot arise on the basis of the existing socio-economic frame-work. A radical alteration in that frame-work is therefore the foundation of our constitution. But the champions of the National Government would not be satisfied. They come forward and tell us that the National Government would not be necessarily a Government of the privileged minority. In support of their contention, they point out that under it the people will have the power to vote and the masses being in a numerical majority will naturally control the Government; in other words, the distinction between a National Government and a People's Government is more or less distinction between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Perhaps many of the supporters of the so-called National Government sincerely believe that it will be a Government controlled by the downtrodden majority. The belief however is erroneous and the mistake in it will become quite clear if we subject it to a somewhat searching analysis.

As a matter of fact these believers themselves would be unable to reconcile their belief with the criticism they so often offer of the Parliamentary democracies of the European countries, of Britain or the

U.S.A. The foundation of their belief is the idea that under parliamentary democracy, the rule of the majority prevails and since the majority in any country is of the exploited people, parliamentary democracy is the rule of the exploited masses. We do not have to go very far in finding the mistake in this argument, but before I do so, let me draw your attention to certain very fundamental considerations regarding the establishment of this so-called parliamentary democratic government in our country.

This kind of democracy is said to be a rule of the majority. Of course, the minority under it is treated with respect and tolerance and is given the scope to propagate its own views and convert itself into a majority. It has, however, to submit itself in the meantime to the decisions of the majority. Such submission is possible only when the differences between the two are not pertaining to the fundamentals on which the social structure is based. Given the agreement on fundamentals, there is room for tolerance of each other, respect for each other's views, concern for providing scope to their popularisation and even readiness to have one set of rulers replaced by another. This agreement on fundamentals however can exist only when and so long as they are conducive to the general progress of the society as a whole. That can be the case within the frame-work of an expanding economic system, a system which provides increasing material benefits to the entire society and which thus creates the basis for increasing social, cultural or spiritual liberation. It is not an accident that the parliamentary democracies should have thrived in the 19th century, nor again is it an accident that they should have crumbled and collapsed in the 20th. The explanation is to be obtained from the expanding capitalistic economy of the 19th century on the one hand and the contracting capitalism of the 20th on the other. Can we have an expanding capitalism in our country? Indian capitalism is already talking the language of planning. Planning and capitalism are antithetical. Planning has never been a feature of capitalism in progress. It is only under condition of decadence that capitalism sits down to plan and the result is a gangster Fascist economy, which implies in the political sphere destruction of democracy. History shows cases where constitutions once put into operation proved themselves unworkable because of the absence of a suitable socio-economic atmosphere essential for their working. Assuming therefore that we shall have a parliamentary democratic constitution in this country, it will not work successfully at all on the basis of the existing socio-economic structure. The supreme question therefore will be which way will these champions of parliamentary democracy go? Will they go in the direction of capitalism which wants to plan the economic life of the country and therefore destroy demo-

cracy or will they go in the direction of socialism which would like to plan the social life with the object of preserving democracy?

The clash between capitalism and democracy is a fundamental feature of the historic epoch in which we live. A democratic government has a tendency to create an urge in the direction of a democratic society. That urge begins to assert itself through the various institutions of democracy. Capitalism on the other hand, in the period of decline—and Indian capitalism is no exception to that—becomes increasingly unable to afford the luxury of liberalism and prepares itself to destroy democracy. This basic clash begins to come to the surface when you have in the country political parties which disagree on the fundamentals. In fact the clash expresses itself through them. The institutional frame work of democracy increasingly becomes unworkable. The atmosphere of supreme tolerance, with which, for example, a Voltaire can talk to a Rousseau that, “I entirely disagree with all that you say but will defend till my death your right to say it,” increasingly disappears. The social structure as it were comes to be thrown into a melting pot. Either democracy will defend itself and therefore control property or property will destroy democracy. To conceive of successful functioning of democracy, while leaving the institutions of property quite in tact, is to ignore the entire history of the world for the past generation. When these champions of democracy come and tell us that a national government will be a democratic government, they have to answer the question, in order to prove their contention: “What will that national government do to property, to the vested interests in the country?” The answer in fact is already there though they will ignore it. Every single Chamber of Commerce in this country, every single employers’ organisation, has been championing the demand for national government and if someone comes and tells us that they have been doing so for committing an economic suicide, he must be either a fool or a knave or both. No democratic constitution can work successfully in this country unless it is based upon an entirely different socio-economic frame-work from that at present. Fundamental alterations in the existing property relationships are thus a pre-condition for the successful functioning of democracy. You will not have masses exercising freely their right to vote when a handful of people in the community control their economic, social or cultural life. Everybody may be equal before the law, but everybody is not equal before the judge. All may have equal freedom to spend their vacation in Kashmir, but all do not have vacations in the first place, and cannot spend them like that in the second. The dignity of human personality must be respected in the economic or social realm if the respect for it in the political or legal realm is not to be fraudulent. Democracy can no longer be real except in a democratic society. When we say that this draft proposes to establish democracy

in the country, what is actually meant is that it proposes to establish a democratic society.

The draft removes the difficulties of parliamentary democracy in another direction also. These difficulties arise from its institutional frame work. In fact, as Gladstone once put it, these institutions are not in any sense perfect but are simply a "bowing down to imperfections". Take for example the very term 'represent.' What is meant by representing the people? We have all sorts of claimants to that title in our country. Everyone comes forward and asserts that he represents the people. For me he is simply making an ununderstandable assertion. If, for example, you go to any village in this country, affected let us say by small pox-epidemic and take a vote of the village population on the issue of vaccination versus the worship of some idol, you will have perhaps a 100% vote in favour of the latter. If a man therefore comes forward and demands a universal worship of that idol as a remedy for the disease, which takes a fairly large amount of toll of human lives in our country and further asserts his demand on the basis of his being a representative of the people, what answer will you give to him? Does he represent the people? Yes, of course, for he has a 100% support for his proposition; but then his proposition itself wins support not from the intelligence or understanding of the people but from their ignorance, superstition or backwardness. Would it not be more correct to say that what he represents actually is that faith, that superstition or that ignorance? There may be some one coming in his place and demanding universal vaccination and he will be an equally good representative of the people representing their interests though he may not be supported by them for the time being. There may be raised a question as to what then is the criterion for deciding that interest of the people? The criterion of course is the verdict of the people themselves but it must be an intelligent verdict. For that we must make them intelligent, conscious, capable of seeing their interests and we can do so only by submitting to their verdict what we have clearly formulated as being in their interest. If you go for example to a peasant and ask him whether he would like the landlord or the money-lender to go, he will give you the verdict. If, on the other hand, you go and ask him whether he would like a national government to come into power, he may perhaps look dumbfounded at your face and refuse to say anything. In fact the dumb millions are not dumb. They can speak and we have formulated their voice. We shall submit it to them for their decision and demand their verdict.

The weaknesses of parliamentary democracy arose from the imperfections of its institutional frame work. Under it on occasions there may be divergence between the legislature and the

people. The opinion of the majority in the legislature may not be the opinion of the majority in the country even assuming the existence of universal franchise. The individual may be goaded to take to the paths not likely to promote his interests by the various agencies of propaganda and publicity, organised by those possessing economic power. As a helpless individual, faced with gigantic social forces, he is likely to be too prone to surrender the power which the right to vote is supposed to confer upon him. Further such power is exercised only once every 3 or 4 or 5 years. As Rousseau, for example, once said "Englishmen think they are free. Yes, they are free when once they go to vote for the candidates to the Parliament and again they are slaves for another five years." This kind of atomised voter has all along been a singular weakness in the foundation of popular sovereignty. People, as atomised individuals, cannot be sovereign. They have to be organised for that purpose. They cannot be, further sovereign once every four or five years while remaining dupes or pawns for the rest of the time. They have to be placed in the position of continually exercising their sovereign power. This can happen only in a democracy which is organised. It is only the institutions of such an organised democracy that can furnish a guarantee of popular sovereignty and our draft constitution suggests what those institutions will be. Its concept of organised democracy is indeed a unique concept, placing the people in a really sovereign position as against the fictitious sovereignty supposed to be possessed by them under the so called parliamentary democracy.

The mover of the resolution, Com. Tarkunde, has already made it clear to you how the draft has tackled some of the problems of contemporary politics in our country. It suggests for instance, a solution of the problem of communal relationship through the angle of reconstruction of the social life calculated to create an atmosphere conducive to harmony. Concession of Pakistan on the basis of a uniformly democratic constitution all over India is the only correct solution of this problem of a multi-national state. We shall never be able to solve that problem through the angle of nationalism. For some time the problem was ignored. Then came the period when it was ridiculed. Gradually came the time when Pakistan began to be hated and now everybody seems to be scratching his head as to what is to be done about it. The draft suggests the solution of this problem consistent with its genuine democratic approach; a solution which will tend to build up a happy and harmonious relationship between the two major communities in this country.

I need not go into the other aspects of this draft, nor is it necessary to deal with the actual political apparatus suggested in it

at length. As a matter of fact, Com. Tarkunde has dealt with both ~~these~~ quite well and elaborately. I would, however, only like to add a few words concerning one or two aspects which are particularly striking and which ought to be fully appreciated.

Politics generally is considered to be a dirty game. It is viewed as the field for unscrupulous power-hunting people who indulge in all sorts of manouevs, manipulations, trickeries and treacheries with a view to obtaining power. That being the general feeling about politics, decent or cultured people have often kept themselves away from it. This may be the case with politics for power. The approach in this draft however is an approach of politics with a philosophy. You would find that approach on every single page of this document and therefore it suggests a solution of one of the outstanding paradoxes of modern political life. In modern politics we have witnessed on a number of occasions people possessed of power being thoroughly ignorant of what to do with it, while those who know what to do with power, did not possess it. This divorce between knowledge and power is expected to be removed under this constitution. It is placing power in the hands of knowledge. People, fully conversant with the conditions of material as well as spiritual well-being of men and knowing the ways and means of promoting it, alone should be able to possess the requisite power to do so and be given a chance to exercise it. In other words harnessing the entire intellectual resources of the community to the service of its well-being is an important and outstanding feature of this draft. It will be seen when you look to the composition of the Council of State, where Jurists, Economists, Historians, Engineers, Medical men etc., are to be expected to participate in planning the collective life of the people. The idea may not be new. Its roots may be traced by some to Plato's Philosopher King, but the idea undoubtedly is new and novel so far as any actual constitution in any country of the world is concerned and it needed a 20th century Plato to fit it in properly in a clear-cut, coherent, well-knit political apparatus.

The second feature to which I would like to draw your attention is that the concept of democracy embodied in this constitution is that of a democracy capable of defending itself. I have already made it clear that to do so, democracy must control property and the draft suggests ways in which that control will actually be exercised. The indirect political influence of property will be ruled out under the socio-economic structure suggested in the draft. The direct influence through participation in the functioning of the political machinery will be avoided by concrete provisions to that effect. It is not, therefore, the picture of a democracy, the institutions of which have provided a convenient entrance for the enemies of democracy to get in and destroy it from

within. It is a picture of a democracy which will keep its enemies strictly under its control and deprive them of their capacity for mischief.

For 50 years or more we have been struggling for freedom of the country. The ideal however has all along remained illusive. It is for the first time that this ideal is being placed in a definite and concrete form before the people through this masterpiece of social engineering. It expresses what the overwhelming majority of Indian people need and hope for. Let us carry this message of their hope to them now. Let us rally them in support of it, with an irresistible urge to translate these hopes into actuality and there is no power on earth that shall keep us slaves. Freedom shall be ours, we shall be free.

—Being the speech delivered at The Calcutta Conference while winding up the discussion of the resolution on The Draft Constitution.

THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

Review and Perspective

By V. B. Karnik

There cannot be any doubt now about the defeat of the Axis Powers. This in itself is a most welcome event. For the alternative to the defeat would have been a triumph of Fascism. If Fascism had triumphed the lights of liberty throughout the world would have been put out for generations together and the world would have been thrown back into mediaeval barbarism. I would consider my support to the war justified, even if nothing better happens. For, the defeat of Fascism secures to the toiling masses, to say the least, the possibility and the opportunity of conducting a struggle for freedom and Democracy.

But as a matter of fact the defeat of Fascism is directly resulting in the growth of a higher Democracy in all the liberated countries. This is borne out by what is happening in France, in Yugoslavia, in Italy and Belgium. The process is no doubt uneven and irregular. In some countries it is being arrested as for example in Greece. There may be some such exceptions, there may be difficulties in some places, but it cannot be denied that the general tendency is towards a resurgence of Democracy in all countries liberated from the Fascist yoke.

The nature of the war and the character of the forces that participated in the anti-Fascist war have pre-determined this develop-

ment. In every occupied country the big financiers and industrialists and generally the wealthy classes went over to Hitlerism, adopted the policy of collaboration and helped the Nazis to consolidate their power. The resistance was started and kept up by the common men, the manual and intellectual workers, the socialists, the communists and the democrats. It is these elements which conducted the liberation struggle. When the struggle ended in victory with the powerful support of the Anglo-American and the Red armies and new civil governments came to be formed power naturally passed into the hands of those who conducted the struggle. Democracy is being re-established and the common man is endeavouring to see that it is not the same old parliamentary democracy but that it is leavened with a large element of social and economic equality. A new and higher type of democracy is being evolved in a number of European countries.

We view these developments in European countries with great pleasure. But our thoughts turn nearer home. What is happening in our own country? Our country did not become an actual theatre of war. Nevertheless our contribution to the success of the war has not been small. Our soldiers fought on every front and fought no less courageously and heroically than the soldiers of any other country. Our workers kept the factories running and turned our backward agricultural country into a great arsenal for armies fighting in the various theatres of Asia and Africa. Our peasants starved themselves and produced the food and the raw materials required by the army and the civilian population. The large masses of our people have in one way or the other participated in the war efforts and contributed materially to the destruction of Fascism. By virtue of that contribution they are entitled to demand that they should be allowed to share in the political and social liberation of peoples that is taking place as a result of the destruction of Fascism.

What however, is, the prospect? There can be no doubt that there will be a change of regime in India. The old pre-war imperialist-cum-bureaucratic state cannot continue in existence. It is bound to be replaced. But will it be replaced by a people's democratic state as the Indian people have the right to expect and demand? The Radical Democratic Party is of the opinion that only such a change can be of advantage to the people. It is resolved to secure that change. It appeals to all freedom loving elements in the country to work together with it for mobilising the masses to ensure that change. It has the hope and the confidence that it will be able to generate enough popular strength to secure that objective and to foil all attempts in the contrary direction. It cannot, however, fail to take notice of the ominous political developments that are taking place in the country. They cast a dark shadow

across the Indian people's path to freedom, progress and prosperity.

The essential point of those political developments is the growing influence of the upper classes on the policy and actions of the Government of India. A new state of the upper classes, the national-capitalist state, is raising its ugly head. British imperialism may be formally still in power. It is retaining a rigid control over some departments of the Government in order that war efforts may not be adversely affected. But its social policies, particularly its activities in relation to the vital economic problems of the people are dictated and directed by the representatives of industrial and financial magnates in office or out of office. At the end of the war the reservations that exist today will disappear and entire power may pass into the hands of the Indian upper class. The economic power of the Indian upper class has grown tremendously during the war years. Economic power is bound to bring in its wake political power. The upper class will be installed in power. India will become independent of Great Britain, but the Indian people will remain slaves as before getting only a change of masters.

The major political parties in the country are attempting to secure the change of masters. Their present demand for the establishment of a national Government is a demand of setting up a government responsible to a legislature elected by a bare 3 per cent of the population. Their ultimate demand is only for independence, meaning thereby a cessation of British rule. They are significantly silent about what is to happen after the British go away. They are silent because what they contemplate is the replacement of the British rule by the rule of the upper classes. The major political parties and the nationalist movement are dominated by the upper classes. It is but natural in view of this fact that they cannot think of people's freedom or democratic regime. Having nothing positive to offer to the people they can think only of exploiting the national sentiment and the people's resentment against the British rule. That is the sole basis of the movement that they are trying to develop in the country. By themselves they are not a big force. They can be easily tackled by the people and put in their proper place. They cannot stand for a minute against the mighty movement of the people.

But the tragedy of the situation is that the British in this country are being taken in by their propaganda and their manoeuvres. It is they who are placing them in power. Owing to the failure of the Congress and the Muslim League to agree among themselves a formal national government may not have been placed in power. But as the Viceroy stated in his address to the Associated Chambers of Commerce a virtual national government is already in existence, a national govern-

ment in the sense of a government controlled by the Indian upper class. This government has come into existence as a result of the gradual transfer of power to the upper classes. The idea seems to be growing that the representatives of the upper classes, are good administrators, they can preserve law and order, they can hold the people down, they can extort sacrifices from the people without much uproar, the British should therefore, before quitting, hand over power to them. The British administrators in India appear to be bent upon acting according to that idea. If they do that, it will be the worst betrayal of the Indian people.

It will not be, however, only a betrayal of the Indian people. It will be an equal betrayal of the best interests of British Democracy on whose authority and as whose representatives the British administrators are ruling over the country. A national capitalist regime will close India's doors to British trade and industry let alone investing capital and exploiting Indian resources in partnership with Indian capitalists. As is fondly imagined by some British financial interests backing up the Congress, even normal trade will become impossible. The objective of the national capitalist regime in India will be to produce cheap goods with cheap labour and cheap raw materials and to capture as many British markets as possible. The ideal placed before the people will be a mighty nation and the entire development will be on the lines of Nazi Germany. As a result of the last 200 years of relationship of political subservience the British people will be the convenient target at which all the people's pent-up hatred and resentment and dissatisfaction against poverty and starvation and misery can be directed. The national-capitalist state will not fail to do that. Such a state will be equally disastrous to the interests of the Indian and the British people.

The establishment of a democratic regime in India is as desirable from the point of view of the British people as it is from the point of view of the Indian people. It is only such a regime that can establish friendly relations between the two peoples and develop the trade and industry of both to the mutual advantage of both. There is no conflict between the interests of the Indian and British people. A free, democratic and prosperous India will be of invaluable help to British Democracy. The Indian people are determined to establish a democratic regime in this country. Their task will be immensely facilitated if they get in it the help and co-operation of the British people.

Why should the British people act against the interests of the Indian people by handing over power to the Indian upper classes? Placing the upper classes in power is no expiation for the sin of having held India in bondage. If there is a desire to make amends to India,

the best amends would be the setting up of a democratic people's regime. Some liberals and leftists in England advocate to their people the adoption of a policy of non-interference. They say "the Indian problem is a problem for Indians to settle. We, the British people should not interfere in it. The only thing that we can do is to quit." If this advice were going to be strictly followed, I for one, would not complain. I have enough confidence in the strength of the people to smash the opposition of the tiny minority of the upper classes, provided they did not have the backing of the state power. If I were assured of that I would accept and welcome the policy of non-intervention. But what are the facts? Those who advocate this policy demand in the same breath the handing over of power to a national government of the Congress and the League. This is not non-interference, it is active intervention against the people. You place an upper class government in power—the upper classes with all the coercive machinery of the state and then say—'let the Indian people decide for themselves.' This is an extremely queer position to adopt. One can understand reactionary monied interests adopting it, out of short-sightedness. They may prefer to have in India a national capitalist rather than a democratic regime. But it passes one's understanding how democrats and socialists and leftists can adopt it. They should on the other hand demand an active intervention on the part of British Democracy for the purpose of establishing a democratic regime in India. The days of non-intervention are long past. Democracy in every country has to be now vigilant about what is happening in neighbouring countries and all over the world. Growth of Fascism in a neighbouring country or in any part of the world spells a danger to Democracy in every country. That being the case Democracy is now required to adopt an international and aggressive outlook. British Democracy will have to adopt that attitude towards India in her own interest as well as in the interest of Indian Democracy.

British Democracy could not so long adopt a correct attitude towards the happenings in India and towards the solution of the Indian problem because it had no information about the realities of the Indian problems and about the growth of democratic forces. It had heard only about the nationalist organisations and had been given to understand that they were the only organisations of the Indian people. New information is, however, now being made available to the British people. Our representative in London Com. A. K. Pillai has done splendid work in that connection. The delegation of the Indian Federation of Labour to the World Trade Union Conference which was in England for four months contacted the British trade union and labour movement and gave it information about the demands of the Indian people and about the growth of the new democratic movement

organised under the banner of the Radical Democratic Party. The new awareness and consciousness that have been created as a result of this propaganda found expression in the deliberations and resolutions of the recent conference of the British Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. These developments entitle us to hope that it will not be long before that there will be a clearer understanding of the Indian problem by the British people and especially by its great labour, trade union and co-operative movements and that a real and a close alliance will grow between the two peoples. The visit of Com. A. K. Mukerjee as a delegate to the World Trade Union Conference to be held in London early in February will materially help that process. He will carry to the British workers our most fraternal greetings and our request for a helping hand in the struggle for people's freedom that we are waging here.

We know that British Democracy however powerful and however interested cannot solve our problems for us. They will have to be solved by us alone and we have the confidence that we shall solve them. What we desire is that unnecessary and avoidable difficulties should not be placed in our path by the imposition upon us of an upper class regime and that we should have the opportunity of making our voice heard through the provision of adult franchise and through a guarantee of some fundamental political rights and a minimum amount of social security. The course of Indian history can be definitely set now by the establishment of a provisional government composed of persons committed to a democratic programme and pledged to the establishment of a democratic regime. We have made this suggestion to the Viceroy on several occasions. Democratic elements in England can take up this suggestion and by insisting on its implementation pave the way for the establishment of a democratic regime in India. That is our appeal to British Democracy.

We are however aware of the fact that an anti-democratic alliance is taking shape in the country through an understanding between decrepit imperialism and the rising Indian Fascism. We are resolved to fight it and fight it we shall as resolutely and as passionately as we fought and are fighting against Fascism. Over twenty years back we pledged ourselves to a ceaseless struggle for freedom and democracy. We are not going to give it up when it is already succeeding in a number of European countries. The prospect in our country is rather gloomy. But a gloomy prospect has never deterred an army of liberation. We are the army of Indian liberation. Nothing will daunt us and we have the confidence that we shall win.

—Being the speech delivered while moving the political resolution at the Calcutta Conference.

THE IDEAL OF FREEDOM

By: **Pandit Laxmanshastri Joshi.**

All thoughts and actions of our Party are centred around the ideal of freedom. Cultural history of mankind shows that if the forms of human yearnings can be stated in terms of general principles, the ideal of freedom is the only innermost urge of human soul. Freedom is the negation of all obstructions in the way of fulfilment of desires. The concept of freedom necessarily entails the concept of power. For the negation of obstruction in the fulfilment of desires is not possible without power. Power and freedom are necessary adjuncts. Without power freedom becomes impossible. Power is means to an end in the context.

Man needs primarily food, clothing, shelter, security, progeny, health and vitality. In the early history of mankind the human mind was completely engrossed in the fulfilment of these primary needs. To fulfil these basic needs man tried to control and employ the powers of sky and earth, but met with failures. The early history of natural religions is the history of sincere efforts to control the powers of nature for the fulfilment of earthly desire. Even the so-called great religion of Vedas primarily figures as a religion which tried to empower man to control the natural forces defied and demonised (**काम्योहि वेदाधिगमः**). After sometime becoming conscious of his failure to overcome the fears of hunger and thirst, death and disease through the real and imaginary ways of controlling nature man created the Other World-

Heaven, a place of enjoyment of freedom. Heaven is a creation of human mind, conscious of its utter frustration in this life. His transmigrated material freedom is heaven. In heaven there is no fear of hunger or thirst, old age and death and all means of enjoyment are at his disposal. What is called sin in this world is no sin in heaven. The heaven created by the mythologies of Hindus and the Koran of Muslims is a place of sensual enjoyment. The unsophisticated human mind created the heaven of this sort.

The second stage of religious history is an era of transcendental metaphysical concept of spiritual freedom. Man abstracted, idealised and projected his soul out as the creator, knower and mover of the world—God. In him he found realised his ideal of freedom in all dimensions.

Man cannot live without the ideal of freedom—illusory or real. When it takes the illusory shape it is sublimated and exaggerated out of all proportions, because imagination or illusion transgresses the limits of actual reality. Under the delusion of freedom of the other World a small group of the ruling class kept in bondage the whole humanity for thousands of years. The masses could bear the mortal miseries and sorrows of slavery only on the strength of a faint hope of freedom in the next world. The hope of real freedom in this world can alone free man from the illusion of metaphysical freedom. The illusion of metaphysical freedom is a symptom of man's inability and impotence to obtain real freedom in this world.

The period of Renaissance in the history of mankind is the beginning of departure. Man began to try to come into his own. All the history of the last three hundred years is a history of man's strivings to secure secular freedom. The rise of democracy has shown the way to achieve that freedom. The material conditions to empower humanity at large to achieve secular freedom have been created through the advancement of modern science and technical developments. The secular ideal of freedom with all its spiritual implications is the gift of modern history of western society. But its material foundation, namely the democratic reorganisation of human society, was not laid before the Russian Revolution. The Russian Revolution provided the material conditions of empowering the people and bringing within their reach the enjoyment of real freedom for which man was thirsting and trying through the ages.

The realisation of secular and social freedom in all its implications is the precondition to liberate human reason. Reason is the distinctive quality of soul. All the philosophers of India have defined the soul as the seat of reason and knowledge. The objective reality

when controlled becomes the instrument of knowledge. Ignorance is the bondage and negation of the soul. To liberate the soul is to liberate reason. All the ideologies which deny secular freedom to the majority of human beings are soul-killing ideologies. The ideologies of Indian nationalism—Gandhism of the Congress, Hinduism of the Mahasabha or the religious ideologies of other nationalistic political parties do not assure social freedom to the masses of the people. On the other hand they stand in the way of the masses realising social freedom by creating some mythical, metaphysical ideas of freedom.

The Gandhian concept of political and social freedom is based on the ideal of Varnashram Dharma, derived from the scriptures and religious law books, Vedas, Smritis and Bhagwat Geeta. This has been repeatedly proclaimed by Mahatma Gandhi. Varnashram Dharma is based on the slavery of the producing masses and sacerdotal supremacy. It means to keep the toiling masses on the starving level under the illusion of freedom in the other world. Ram Rajya is a synonym to the rule of Varnashram Dharma. Ram had to perform the 'duty' of assassinating a shudra who aspired for the privileges of a Brahmin to become worshipful by practising penance instead of doing his duty as a shudra, which was in that particular instance, to labour in the field. A new sacerdotal class under the hegemony of Gandhian Big Business is rising in India. It is true, Gandhism does not appear to believe in the old caste system. The caste system has already been undermined by the industrialisation of India brought about under the British rule. The Varna Dharma under Gandhian raj will flourish in the form of authoritarian social structure where 90 per cent of the population will have to function as shudras or slaves without any reference to caste or creed.

The moral creed of Gandhism is a spiritual or internal authority under which the common man of Indian society will live a life of scarcity without protest. The Gandhian creed of asceticism will idealise the scarcity and miseries of the masses, while the Gandhian cadre will have material and sensual enjoyments under its pretext. The external authority will have to do very little to keep the masses under subjugation.

Radical Democracy stands for the negation of any authority internal or external. The internal authority implies the rule of conscience or divine impulse; which is to be replaced by scientific knowledge leading to a continual readjustment of the social existence. And the external authority consists of the political rule of the upper classes. That will be replaced by a democratic State based on the principle of the sovereignty of the people. The economic and political planning for democratic freedom will lead the people to a stage where they will

be enabled to enjoy a life of plenty, physical strength and vitality. The eternal burden of material necessity has stifled the human soul. Reason will have its full play when the soul is liberated. To liberate the soul from its bondage is the task of our Party. We are the standard bearers of the freedom of the people, the eternal demand of the human soul, of which the foundation will be vitality and health symbolised by red colour and the free play of reason in the form of continually and infinitely radiating enlightenment symbolised by the burning torch.

—Being the speech delivered at the Calcutta Conference.

A REPLY TO OUR CRITICS

By : M. N. Roy

Two points stand out prominently from the entire proceedings of this Conference. Firstly, our claim that the Radical Democratic Party alone has presented before the country a concrete picture of people's freedom and has indicated the way to that freedom; and secondly, we have pointed out a danger—a growing danger—to that freedom. The danger is a conspiracy, and we have used that term deliberately—between those who held the reins of power until now and are still holding them formally, and the pretenders to power. It will be only appropriate to conclude this Conference by saying a few words on both these points by way of meeting any possible objections to either of them.

There are other political parties in the country. The Radical Democratic Party is the youngest of them all. Therefore, our claim to represent the aspirations of the popular masses and to be the only champions of the cause of their freedom may be challenged. All the other parties have declared that they also are fighting for the freedom of the country, and they have also proclaimed their concern for the welfare of the people.

To begin with, let me make it very clear that the Radical Democratic Party does not contest the motive of anybody. We do not doubt the good faith of anybody. When any party comes forward and says that it stands for the freedom of the country and is motivated by the

desire to promote the welfare of the people, we take them on their word; we do not dispute their honesty. But at the same time, before we can join hands with others in pursuance of what may appear as our common goal, we want to be clear about the nature of the goal which others also profess to be pursuing.

Naturally, we measure others by our standards. Our standards may not be acceptable to them, just as others' standards may not be acceptable to us. If, by measuring the pretensions of others by our standards, we find that the freedom they are standing for is not the freedom that we want, we naturally declare that that is not the freedom we want, and place before the country the picture of the freedom we want.

If all other political parties will take up a similarly tolerant attitude—an attitude of trust—if they will not begin fighting their political opponents by disputing their motives and maligning them, the political atmosphere of the country will be considerably more congenial. We have the clear conscience that the Radical Democratic Party, which has been perhaps the most controversial factor in the country during recent years, has not contributed anything to vitiate the political atmosphere of the country. We have differed from others. We have frankly and freely criticised others. But we have not started by disputing the motives of anybody simply because he does not agree with us.

Therefore, I think, it is necessary to meet all possible objections to our claim to be the true representatives of the aspirations of the Indian people. That will be done by a brief review of the history of the political movement of our country. In making this review, I shall have to subject to criticism certain programmes, certain parties, certain personalities. I hope it will be taken in a spirit of tolerance. There is a habit in our country to regard criticism as an attack. There is no question of our attacking anybody. You express a certain point of view; I disagree with your point of view, and I say why I disagree. Unless I can prove that your point of view is wrong, I cannot disagree with it, and in order to prove that it is wrong, I have to criticise it. But if one says that the Congress programme, for instance, is wrong in this or that aspect, that for this or that reason Gandhist ideas are not sound, immediately there is a hue and cry that the temerous non-conformist is running down the nationalist leaders and parties. It is only reasonable to expect that, when I shall criticise certain other points of view in order to justify our point of view, that will not be taken in this silly and childish manner.

It is maintained that the Congress stands for the freedom of the people and that Gandhi is the greatest champion of popular welfare;

therefore, what is the use of having another party of the people? All those who want to fight for freedom should join the Congress, create a united front, and thereby help the attainment of freedom. Many may fall in line, taking the claim on its face value. Others may have doubts. So, let us examine the programme of the Congress as published. I do not know what is in the mind of Gandhi or Nehru; for ought I know the ideas in their mind may be much higher and better than those I entertain: I would not doubt it. But that belief would not take me very far. As politicians, we are dealing with this material world in a concrete manner. We must go by what Gandhi has said. Just as we do not dispute or doubt anybody's motive, neither can we go by the assumption that there are certain ideas in somebody's mind even if he does not speak them out.

The high-light in the Congress programme is the resolution on fundamental rights passed at the Karachi Congress session, although that light has never shone very brightly in the firmament of the political practice of the Congress. However, that is the highest and clearest expression of the hypothetical intention or desire of the Congress to liberate the masses, to achieve freedom of the people. For one thing, the Karachi resolution is an old story, and I do not think many Congressmen remember it. Secondly, since that resolution was passed, nothing was done to implement it. For some years after the passing of that resolution, the Congress had no power and consequently nobody can blame it if it did not implement it. But later on, in several provinces, the Congress was in power. How many of the fundamental rights did Congressmen attempt to enforce? The only one was prohibition, and that also as an experiment; one may legitimately doubt if that is a fundamental right. As regards the merits of that particular fundamental right, if you would only for a minute listen to any sociologist, he will easily explain to you the endless fallacies of the experiment of prohibition. But let us assume that the Congress ministries did not have time enough to implement their programme or not power enough or that, when the Congress will again have power, the programme will be implemented. What is that programme? That evidently is the crucial question.

For the definition of that programme I would refer you to the autobiography of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru. By way of mentioning my humble self, Nehru talked about the fundamental rights resolution of the Karachi Congress. There was a rumour that I had something to do with the drafting of that document. Nehru dispelled that rumour by saying that M. N. Roy would be the last to claim credit for that resolution, because he would ridicule it as petit-bourgeois reformism. So, in the opinion of Nehru himself, the Karachi resolution on fundamental rights is nothing but petit-bourgeois reformism; and even that programme

was forgotten when Congress came to power in a number of provinces. The crucial question of land-ownership was not touched in the Tenancy Acts passed by the Congress Ministries. Even rent was not reduced. The U. P. Congress Committee, on my initiative, recommended that a substantial reduction of rent should be included in the Tenancy Reform Act of the province. The ministry disregarded the recommendation. Even the petit-bourgeois reformism of the Karachi Fundamental Rights resolution was subsequently superceded by the Gandhist "Constructive Programme", the pseudo-humanitarianism of which is meant to blunt the edge of growing popular discontent against the reactionary social *status quo*.

Let us go further and examine the thing on its merits. Anybody can go through that resolution and it will be clear to him that even if that programme was implemented, the social *status quo* in this country would not be changed.

Finally, we have had published in this country, only a week or two ago, another economic plan. There was the Bombay Plan and the People's Plan, and we knew for some time that one Dr. Agarwal was preparing another plan of economic development under the direction and with the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi himself. That plan is now published. According to it, landlordism is expected to be liquidated with the co-operation of the landlords themselves in two generations! The rest of the plan is on par with this approach to the crux of the economic problem of our country.

Let us go one step further. While, on the one hand, except for this very ambiguous and almost forgotten Karachi resolution on Fundamental Rights, the Congress has not published any programme of social reconstruction. A complete blue-print for the economic reconstruction of the country has been published about a year ago. The Congress has not sponsored that plan; but it is well known that all its authors—if they are not actually Congressmen, and some of them actually are—are staunch supporters of the Congress and devout followers of the Mahatma. We also know that the supporters and sponsors of this plan, and the people who are directly or indirectly associated with it, are the power behind the Congress. In no time a crore of rupees was raised for the Kasturba fund. In saying that, I am not abusing anybody, and mean no harm to anybody. I am making a point and I must argue it. A crore of rupees was collected. From where did that money come? Who can contribute a crore of rupees in this country in such a short time? Evidently, the people who have the money. And we know who paid it, because it was published in the press. Similarly, if you go from one point to the other, you will see that the money, without which a vast machinery like the Congress cannot be maintained, has always come

and will always come in the future, from the industrialists and traders and financiers of the country who are behind the Bombay Plan.

Let it be conceded for the sake of argument that the Congress cannot be held responsible for it. Well, let us look into the matter more closely. The plan was out just before Gandhi's release from detention. When after his release he was staying at Juhu, all the authors and sponsors of the Bombay Plan came to see him. Gandhi did not say a word about or against the plan, although it was everywhere talked about at that time, and its authors discussed it with the Mahatma. The plan is now before the country for a year. A raging controversy has been going on. But the Congress leaders and the organisations who claim to be the champions of the freedom of the people, who claim to be working for the welfare of the masses, have not found it necessary to say a word about the Bombay Plan. Are they for it or against it? As it is to be a blue-print for the future of India, it should be of sufficient importance for the national organisation to express its view about it. Why have they not expressed their view? This silence is very eloquent. And if we draw our inferences from this silence, you cannot blame us for it. Because, any day you can prove that we are wrong, if only the Congress leaders would issue a declaration that they are against the Bombay Plan. We shall immediately apologise for having said that they are supporting the Bombay Plan implicitly.

There was an incident last year which I mentioned in my speech at the beginning of the Conference. That was in the autumn session of the Central Legislature. A member of the Muslim league party moved a resolution condemning the Bombay Plan. Why did not the Congress party join hands? On the contrary, the Congress amendment which replaced the resolution, was virtually an endorsement of the Bombay Plan. And what is the Bombay Plan? We have talked about it at length, and I shall not take your time by repeating what we have said and written in that connection. I would only add one or two sentences, because I got a request from someone in the audience to say something about the failure of the authors of the Bombay Plan to implement their promise to take the public into confidence about the method of distribution in their plan.

It has been proved in many speeches and many books that the Bombay Plan will not promote the welfare of the Indian people. I have written at length about it, so have Professor Parikh and others including many who are not members of the Radical Democratic Party—-independent authors, professors, economists and public men. Now, by circumstantial evidence as well as by the Congress failure to differentiate itself from that plan, we are entitled to believe that the Bombay Plan is the

economic programme of Indian Nationalism, and the Congress as the party of Indian Nationalism is committed to it. That being so, we cannot accept the Congress claim that it stands for the freedom of the Indian people, and therefore be silenced by the question. Why should the Radical Democratic Party be organised to disturb national unity ?

We organised the Radical Democratic Party with the contention that none of the older parties really stands for the freedom of the people; therefore, there must be a party to fight for that freedom. If any of the existing parties claim that it stands for such freedom and shows us its programme for the attainment of the object, and if that programme by its merit and internal logic, will stand out as a programme for promoting the welfare of the Indian people, we shall dissolve our party and join hands with that party. So, you see, we are not creating discord. We are moved by the desire to attain the freedom of our people. And seeing that there is no party working with that object as we understand it, we have formed this party, the Radical Democratic Party. But we are always prepared to join hands and work with any other party which will either accept our programme or propose an alternative programme which will be even better than our programme. So long as none of the existing parties will accept that challenge, we shall claim to be the only party fighting for people's freedom, and as such we shall create a place for ourselves.

If there are other parties which are doing what the people want, and we are simply a handful of people fighting for our own ambitions why do they not ignore us ? Why these frantic efforts to disturb our meetings and conferences ? We do not go and disturb anybody's conferences. As far as we are concerned, anybody may come here to-morrow and hold a conference and preach the greatest absurdities. We shall not disturb them. Let them criticise anything we have said here in this conference for the last four days, oppose our resolutions and even call us names. We shall not take the trouble to disturb them. Because we believe in the judgment and intelligence of the people. We know that, if truth is told with conviction and without fear, truth will prevail. Thus, if any party in the country stands for truth and non-violence, it is the Radical Democratic Party ! And it is the followers of the prophet of truth and non-violence who have been trying for all these days to suppress truth with violent methods.

If thus the claim to stand for the welfare and freedom of the masses of the people cannot be maintained in behalf of the Congress, it is hardly necessary for me to examine the case of the other parties.

I pass on to the second point. We pointed out a danger. That danger is of power passing on to the hands of Indian upper classes.

There is a very plausible reply to this contention of ours. That reply has been already given; and I suppose, in order to disturb the impression that our conference has made on the public mind, all the organs of Nationalism will go on harping on that point. Therefore, let me once and for all burst that bubble.

The argument of our critics is that, if power is really being transferred to the patrons of Indian Nationalism, why do the Government not release the Congress leaders? The point of the argument is to deny that there is any political connection between the Congress and its financial patrons—between the Mahatma and his liberal donors. Therefore the argument is very lame, and the point cannot be driven home. The Congress leaders are not being released, even when power is being transferred to the patrons of the Congress, and the latter are not pressing for their release, simply because their release will create insuperable difficulty about Indian big business quietly getting into the saddle of power. Once the Congress leaders are out, big business will have to press for a settlement with them. Big business representatives will no longer be able to play the double game of demanding a National Government, and themselves joining the present Government. They will have to non-co-operate by way of forcing the hands of the Government. But it can no longer be denied that even with the Congress leaders out of jail a National Government will not be established. That does not depend on the British, but on the agreement between the Congress and the Muslim League, and they will not agree. So, it is impossible to establish a National Government responsible to the present Assembly, constitutionally. The impossibility will be more evident if the Congress leaders were released. The baffling constitutional issue of a responsible government will arise. Since constitutionally, power cannot be passed on to the representatives of the Indian upper classes, it is being done surreptitiously through the backdoor. This procedure suits the convenience of both the parties. It is like a game with distributed cards. The Britishers tell their Indian blood-brothers: 'We want to settle up with you, but your political spokesmen have made a mess of things; leave them out of the picture for the time being, and here is power for you to take over; we shall regularise things constitutionally in the fullness of time.'

That is how, in spite of the dismal failure of the Congress leaders, power is being transferred to Indians, and they are known patrons of the Congress. Addressing the joint session of the Assembly after assuming office, Lord Wavell told the Congress leaders: You give up your attitude of non-co-operation, let all the major parties come to an agreement—and take over power. There is no use alleging that the British Government do not mean to hand over power in reality. That

is again fighting a phantom. Perhaps you don't like this idea of transfer of power ; you would prefer to capture it. But you haven't the guts to do so. Therefore you have no other alternative than to expect power as a gift from those who hold it now, if you want a gift, you naturally have to fulfil the conditions on which they are prepared to make such a gift to you. As long as the conditions are not fulfilled, no use blaming the British Government. The patent fact is that the Indian parties have not been able to present a common front to which power could be transferred. The Muslim League says it represents all the Muslims : the Congress says it represents the whole country including the Muslims ; the Hindu Mahasabha says it represents all the Hindus ; Dr. Ambedkar says he represents all the scheduled castes. And no two of them can agree on anything positive.

That being so, and all of them having conflicting claims and interests, is it not quite natural for those who are expected to transfer power to ask that all these people should agree first on how power should be transferred and to whom ? If you cannot fulfil the conditions on which you can get a gift, no use complaining that the gift is not made. As the alternative, you may say " we shall capture power : the British are usurpers, we shall wrest power from them." But to do neither this nor that, but continually make grievances, that is political imbecility. If you have come to the conclusion that British Imperialism will not transfer power, very well, be prepared to capture it. What is the sense in continually harping on the point that it will not transfer power.? That let us once and for all say that Britain is not going to transfer power, and therefore India must capture it. But no party until now has said that.

The difficulty boils down to this: Most people, when they speak of transfer of power, mean transfer of power to the Congress. Now the Congress may say that it represents the country as a whole. But there are other claimants who say that the Congress does not. Some Congressmen say that they do not want transfer of power to the Congress: let it be transferred to anybody. But would the Congress as an organisation say that, if power was transferred to Mr. Jinnah, the latter should have full authority ? Would they welcome a National Government under Mr. Jinnah ? Let them say if that is so, and if that is what they want. The same is true for all the other claimants to power. The Congress would not be satisfied if power was transferred to any of them; it can be shown by going on with this process of elimination. What remains of the demand is that power must be transferred to the Congress.

People may ask how power can be transferred to the Congress when the Congress leaders are in jail. We maintain that power is being

transferred to the Congress even when Congress leaders are in jail, though indirectly. What has been the position of the industrialists, merchants and financiers during this war? Why have the particular eleven gentlemen been selected as members of the Viceroy's Executive Council? Why is Dalal preferred say, to Professor Parikh as the member in charge of the Department of Planning and Development? Why is Sir Sultan Ahmed preferred to M. A. Khan, Vice-President of the Indian Federation of Labour, or to Amarendranath Chattopadhyaya, who has certainly a more inspiring record as a public man? The Viceroy does not act on his inner voice. There is a method in this madness; there is a policy behind it. Who are these gentlemen? What do they stand for? Whom do they represent? They represent Indian vested interests. They represent exactly those classes and forces who are the power behind the Congress. The British Government has come to realise that it is no longer possible to rule this country except with a government which would be very largely composed of Indians. The present Government is so composed. The British rulers are naturally seeking an alliance with those classes of Indian society whose interests are identical with British vested interests. What is Imperialism in India? It is British capitalism; it is British capital invested in this country for the purpose of exploiting cheap labour, or for selling British goods in a protected market. In pursuance of both these purposes, Imperialism cannot operate except in co-operation with certain sections of Indian society, and that section is the finance capitalists, industrialists and big merchants. If you have a close look at the Government of India, you will find how this class of people is controlling the entire machinery of the State, and therefore determining the entire policy of the Government. And these gentlemen are also patriots. They are all followers of the Mahatma; all of them want a "National Government," meaning the kind of government that they are already running to-day plus the popular support of the Mahatma.

In order to show that there is a deliberate choice and design in all this, I may mention an incident. The conference of the Indian Federation of Labour held last year in Bombay passed a resolution recommending that the Government of India should have a new Department for planning and development. It also resolved to prepare a Plan of Economic Development, which was published eventually and won the approbation of all the progressive elements in the public life of the country. We urged that a popular man should be placed in charge of the new Department. Subsequently, the new Department of the Government was created, but it was placed in charge of a representative of big business. Those who conceived of the idea and pressed for planned economy, were not even consulted.

The choice was Sir Ardeshir Dalal. He stands for something.

What he stands for has been clearly stated in a Plan of Economic Development published in the name of eight leaders of big business, including himself. Why did not the British Government of this country hesitate to indentify themselves with what Dalal stands for? If they had the choice, why did they choose him? There are many other capable men in this country, with executive and administrative ability, who stand for something more non-partisan and objective. Such men did not come into consideration at all. The choice fell on a representative of vested interests.

I shall give you another instance. The Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council are generally believed to be dummies. They are not. In 1942, after Sir Stafford Cripps left, there was a lot of talk about my joining the Council. Several Indian members approached me in that connection. They would not have done so ordinarily; but the rumours of my joining were so thick that it was taken for granted and they probably thought it was better to have me on their side. Urging me to come in, they agreed: "If you join, then it will be possible for us to work as a team, and it will be possible for us to do anything we want." I asked why they did not work as a team in any case, and suggested that they should do so with a common programme. I argued that if all the Indian members pressed for action in pursuance of an agreed programme, prepared to resign en bloc if the Viceroy objected, he could have no option. The resignation en bloc of all the Indian members would cause a world wide scandal, which no Viceroy would risk. The Honourable Members saw the point and requested me to prepare a programme. I complied with the request and submitted the programme in a meeting with four of them. One of them started reading out the programme. It was a modest programme: adequate dearness allowance for the workers; food supply at reasonable prices; measures against profiteering, check of corruption, and an increase in the real wages of the workers. At that point, one of the Honourable Members jumped up and exclaimed: "But that is precisely what the British want—to raise the cost of production and ruin Indian Industries!" That very gentleman resigned a few months later from the Executive Council and became a hero of Nationalism! The Honourable Members would not consider the unfortunate programme any more. We parted company. Is it not evident that the Indian members of the Viceroy's Executive Council cannot do anything to promote popular welfare because they do not want to do so? And does not the incident prove whom they represent.

If we do not want to be blind, the relation between big business and the Congress cannot be hidden any longer. It is there. We also cannot dispute the fact that Indian big business dictates terms to the

Government. War production and war supplies require co-operation of **Indian industrialists and merchants.** They are in a position to blackmail by holding up production and supply of military necessities. Under the pressure of military emergency, Englishmen who still formally rule this country are compelled to concede everything that Indian big business demand.

Some friend has asked if Indian big business, the patrons of the Congress, are so powerful, why are they not getting the Congress leaders released? One may put two and two together and make a guess. These gentlemen must have been told by the Government that their political leaders are so unreasonable that it is very difficult to do anything with them. So, why bother about their release? Why not come in and take over government yourselves? Politics for these gentlemen being only a means to do business, they have put politics aside for a time. All this hue and cry about the release of the national leaders is only a smoke-screen to hide the fact that a national-capitalist State is rising in this country. These are facts. And if somebody has a different opinion, we shall not prevent him from expressing it. But why are they so angry if we express our own point of view? Because we don't express an unfounded opinion; we point out facts—indisputable facts, which speak for themselves, belying all demagogic propaganda. What we say dispels an illusion, purposefully created and carefully nurtured. The Radical Democratic Party is bursting that bubble.

In any political controversy the issue is put as Imperialism versus Nationalism. Why not Imperialism versus Socialism? That is the difference between our way of looking at things and that of the others. All the other parties in this country pose Nationalism as against Imperialism. The Radical Democratic Party poses Socialism against Imperialism. And Socialism means not only elimination of British Imperialism but of all vested interests and all class rule, whether British or Indian. Therefore, against the Radical Democratic party there is a natural alliance between British and Indian vested interests. British vested interest is Imperialism and Indian vested interests is Nationalism.

It has been contended by some press organ in this city that our conference has fired a broadside against Indian vested interests, but ignored Imperialism. It is insinuated that we support British vested interests as against Indian big business, that we condone British Imperialism. As if to drive the subtly made point home, the writer asks rhetorically: What about Churchill? There are only two ways of getting rid of Churchill. One is not to talk about him, not to expect any justice from him, but to rely on your own guts and get rid of him. But Nationalism cannot do that. It wants a gift from him. The beggar

cannot be the chooser. Therefore, you must comply with Churchill's conditions. Nationalism cannot create the condition on which Churchill would make to it a gift of freedom. That is a fact. No use abusing Churchill or anybody. Churchill is a nightmare for the nationalists, because they have not the guts to get rid of him.

We take a realistic view of the situation. We say that just as we do not dispute the motive of the nationalist leaders. similarly we have no reason to dispute the motive of Englishmen. They say to the Indians: Produce a constitution which will have the support of the majority of the people, and we shall endorse it and leave you alone. We have no right to dispute the sincerity of that offer unless we have produced such a Constitution. The Radical Democratic Party has taken up the challenge and drafted a Constitution which will establish democratic freedom and as such is bound to command the support of the majority of the people, irrespective of caste, creed and community. Nobody else has been able to do that. No other party can do that, because only a party standing for the freedom of the masses can do that. The Radical Democratic Party standing for the freedom of the people, has produced such a Constitution. We do not make tall claims. We do not say that this Constitution already has the support of the whole people. But we have taken a kind of gallup poll. We submitted the fundamental principles of the Constitution to a cross-section of the people and won their approbation. Therefore, we were encouraged to draw up a Constitution in detail. We have done that and we shall now again submit the draft constitution to the people. We are confident that it will find as enthusiastic a support as the fundamental principles.

I challenge anybody who says that he wants freedom for the masses of the people from all the innumerable sufferings of their daily life, to study the Constitution drafted by us. He will have to admit that this Constitution will establish that freedom. If somebody else had produced such a Constitution, one might ask, why produce another? But I repeat, nobody has done that. If you can point out to me that it has been done, or even if somebody else will do it even now or later, we shall accept it instead of our draft. We can be so liberal because we know that nobody else can do it or will do it.

There are two alternatives before the fighters for freedom. We propose to unite a majority of the people in a mighty movement in support of the Constitution placed before the country by this conference. None of the older political parties can organise such a movement, which must transcend the present political alignment. The object of the movement is to unite the masses on the platform of democratic freedom which demands elimination of vested interests, native as well as foreign.

The movement in support of the Constitution drafted by us will incidentally create the condition stipulated by the British Government. The British Parliament is committed to endorse a Constitution supported by a majority of the Indian people. If Churchill or any other British statesman would go back on the pledged word, let God help him. That is one way of dealing with Churchill, who has been the proverbial old man of the sea for the Indian nationalists. But as Mr. Churchill is an intelligent man, he may read the writing on the wall in time and accept the Constitution.

What is the other alternative? Let some of the older parties come forward and tell the people: No, the Constitution drafted by the Radicals will not give you freedom: here is another and a better Constitution which you should support. Let any party come with a better Constitution and with it go to the people—not with humbug but on clear social issues, with a concrete picture of greater freedom, and we shall make a gentleman's agreement with them: We shall go to the same village on alternate days, and place our respective Constitutions before the people. We shall not quarrel and not abuse each other. The Radicals never abuse anybody, they criticise and argue. We shall behave like decent human beings having no axe to grind, but solely moved by the interest of the masses of the people. I declare on behalf of the Radical Democratic Party that, if our Constitution is not endorsed by the people against any other Constitution, we shall forfeit the claim to be the only champions of democratic freedom.

We believe that the Constitution drafted by us sets up a platform on which a united front of the majority of the people can be formed. Because a government established according to this Constitution will guarantee the greatest good to the greatest number and free the majority of the people from the misery to which they are subjected at present. We are convinced that, if the other parties will play fair, in a few years the majority of the people will realise that, and endorse this Constitution. They will see that the so-called major political parties have exhausted all their possibilities. Gandhi and Jinnah cannot agree; and the people will say: Let others give the lead.

But we go even further and say: Let the Congress accept this Constitution, and we shall follow the Congress and mobilise the people behind it. If the Congress will establish a government on the basis of the Constitution, we shall step aside and help them to do so. Can you expect anything more to prove the bona fides of any political organisation?

Ours is not a broadside only against the Indian upper classes. It is a broadside against Churchill also in so far as he stands for an upper class regime anywhere in the world. For the very same

reason, it is also against the Indian upper classes. The Indian upper classes can come to power only by the grace of Churchill. They have neither the strength nor the courage to fight Churchill, and they don't want to fight what he stands for. When freedom was round the corner and power within their reach, they miserably failed to grasp it. Therefore, the patrons of Indian Nationalism to-day are looking upon Churchill as the person who alone can give them power. If power must be transferred, it is quite certain that he would much rather transfer it to the Indian upper classes than to the Indian people.

But Mr. Churchill is not immortal. Politically, he is not going to survive this war. There are other political parties in England. Therefore we shall have to expose before the British people the conspiracy of vested interests; we shall have to show to them that the Churchill Government is handing over power to Indian vested interests which have declared their intention of establishing a Fascist dictatorship in this country. We must explain this to the British people because the conspiracy is not only against the Indian people, but harmful for British democracy as well. We cannot do that by simply abusing Mr. Churchill. We have already succeeded, to some extent, in explaining the situation to the British people.

A lot of noise has been made in the Indian press about a resolution passed by the British Labour Party Conference recently. But the most significant fact has been missed. A spokesman of the Executive of the Labour Party, opposing that particular resolution which was ultimately passed by a fluke (most of the delegates had left at the fag end of the conference,) said that the National Congress was not the only factor in Indian public life, and he mentioned Radical Democratic Party as representing the toiling masses and as such a factor to be reckoned with while settling the political future of the country. The nationalist press complained that there had been a conspiracy between the Transport House and the Radical Democratic Party, and both of them were dancing to Mr. Amery's tune and supporting the India office! What is the conspiracy? Why should not the Radical Democratic Party make propaganda in Britain. The Congress has been doing that for many years. If the Congress has the right to carry on propaganda in Britain, why should not others make their point of view heard there? They have been deceiving the British public by saying that the Congress stands for the masses. The Radical Democratic Party has been bursting that bubble. Therefore they are angry. No use abusing us for raising the voice of the dumb millions. Take all the things we publish in Britain. We do not whisper into anybody's ears. We say openly what we have to say; and we can publish only one thousandth part of the literature that the Congress has been publishing in Britain.

You can read our publications and judge whether there is a single lie in what we write. They cannot tolerate it because it is the truth. Although we can publish only a few things in Britain, as soon as they become known to the people who are real friends of India, they appear to be very plausible to them and they begin seeing things in an entirely new light, which explains many things to them. The democratic forces in Britain who want India to be free and prosperous, as a progressive and democratic country, are beginning to realise that they have until now seen only one side of the picture, and now that they are being shown the other side also—the Other India—they are beginning to see light. That is why some people in this country are angry.

The incident in the Conference of the British Labour Party is of significance because that party will most probably form the government of Britain after the war, and that party has recognised the Radical Democratic Party as representing the toiling masses of India and regards it as a factor to be reckoned with. We could achieve that much only by firing our broadside against vested interests, both British and Indian. You cannot work for the freedom of the Indian people without exposing those who are trying to thrive at the expense of the Indian people.

It is argued by critics that our allegation that Indian vested interests, the power behind Nationalism, have been seeking the patronage of American Imperialism, contradicts our contention that there is an alliance between British Imperialism and Indian vested interest. I shall answer this criticism in a few words.

There is a rivalry between Britain and America. Naturally, the Indian upper classes, in order to extract power from Britain, want to take advantage of that rivalry. Therefore they are seeking the protection of America, and the latter is backing up their claim. If the two join hands, Britain will lose the Indian market altogether. Faced with this danger, British industrialists would press the Conservative Government to make concessions to the demands of Indian big business. They are inviting Indian businessmen, scientists, industrialists and other delegations in order to show to them all that capitalist Britain is still a solvent concern. Already the highest demand of Indian capitalism has been conceded. The member in charge of the Department of Planning and Development has explained only the other day that the fundamental object of planning is to 'liberalise' the policy of protection. What does that mean? That means higher prices; that means lower wages and a lower standard of living for the masses of the people, although it certainly means prosperity for a handful of Indian capitalists. When Indian capitalists are running to the flesh pots of Wall Street, and the mouth of lusty American Imperialism is watering, it is quite natural for British capitalism to offer all sorts of bribes and baits to Indian vested

interests in order not to be left out altogether. Therefore we say that British Imperialism is doomed. By making these very concessions, in the hope of saving itself, it is digging its own grave.

The economic policy of Indian Nationalism is autarchy. Therefore, its triumph would be a danger for Britain. She must import food and raw materials for industrial production, and maintain her export trade. There is no other way to pay for the essential imports. Her very existence depends on foreign trade. If Britain losing the Indian market would really promote the welfare of the Indian people, we might be callous enough to disregard her misfortune. But can we be callous also to the misfortune of the Indian people? Will the autarchic economy of Nationalism really promote the welfare of the Indian people? Those who are not prepared to identify increased capitalist profit with national prosperity must answer the question in the negative. Because, it will mean loss of employment for the British people as well as lowering of the standard of living of the Indian people.

The common people in both the countries have a common interest. They must combine to frustrate the conspiracy of vested interests. Therefore the fight for the freedom of the Indian people can no longer be carried on under the banner of Nationalism, which is primarily motivated by racial animosity. It must now take place in the context of an international civil war—a worldwide struggle for the liberation of human society from the domination of vested interests. Socially, this war is an international civil war. Therefore, from the beginning, we believed that it would promote the cause of Indian freedom, and advocated India's unreserved and purposeful participation in the war.

This conflict between popular welfare and vested interests cuts across national borders. Therefore, Nationalism is no longer progressive politics. All the forces, which maintained the *status quo*, and which have now been undermined and can therefore defend themselves only by coercion and violence, are to be found on one side in this international civil war. On the other side, we have the progressive forces throughout the world. If only they will also be united, the perspective of revolution as against counter-revolution will not be so dark as it may sometimes appear. Because of this constellation of forces, Imperialism to-day can be fought only under the banner of Socialism, which we call Radical Democracy. There is no other choice. If you really want to fight Imperialism, you have to stand under the banner of Radical Democracy, which is Socialism. If you are not doing that, you are deceiving the people. Because, under the banner of Nationalism you cannot fight Imperialism in our days, you only help native vested interests which, in power, will keep the people enslaved.

The Radical Democratic Party has blasted the nationalist foundation of Indian politics, and has placed before the Indian people an entirely new outlook, thereby sealing the fate of all those other parties which have been monopolising the political stage in this country. We are not afraid of their opposition. We do what we must do according to our understanding of history and of society and of politics as history in the making. But let it be decent opposition, of a political nature. With such opposition, you will have as much chance as we shall have. We shall win on the merits of our programme; we shall lose if our programme is bad. We have placed a programme before the country or it to judge. If the people endorse our programme, and other parties fail to measure up to it, we should not be blamed. In spite of the discomfiture of other parties, and because of it, the future of the country will be all the brighter. That perspective cannot be changed by trying to suppress our voice. Our voice must be heard. Otherwise, the future of India will be dark indeed.

That is the message of our conference. And I am sure that all lovers of freedom, who may still be misled, will in course of time see that the Radical Democratic Party is the only standard-bearer of people's freedom in the country. And if they do not want to end as the storm-troopers of Indian Fascism, they will rally under the banner of the Radical Democratic Party and act as leaders of the party of the Indian people. Thus reinforced, we shall not have to fear the danger to Churchills or Dalals; we shall fight the whole lot together and defeat them all together; and because our cause is just, victory will be ours.

—Being the concluding Presidential address to the Calcutta Conference.

The Radical Democratic Party

Stands For

A thorough reconstruction of our national life.

Its Object Is

The establishment of democratic freedom, which will mean effective political power for the people.

It is the political organisation of the common people, controlled by themselves, and conducted according to their collective will.

It strives not only for national freedom, but also for the social emancipation of the toiling masses.

It holds that land should belong to those who make it bear fruit.

It demands that rents and taxes should be reduced, so as to relieve the burden on the poor.

It demands control of usury, and provision of cheap credit so as to protect the peasants, workers and middle classes against the exactions of the money lender.

It stands for the development of modern industry, for relieving the pressure on land by creating new employment and causing increase of national wealth through the productive investment of accumulated riches.

It demands adequate payment for labour, and legislation for promoting the welfare of the working class and salaried employees.

It demands free schools, hospitals and supply of water for drinking and irrigation.

It advocates modernism in every walk of life as against revivalism.

It stands for Swaraj—a government of the people by the people, instead of dreaming of legendary Ramraj.

It is the torch-bearer of enlightenment, which will dispel obscurantism in the political as well as the spiritual life of the nation.

It wants the disinherited to come to their own, and enjoy the richness and fulness of life on this earth.

It wants man to be the master of the world, and the maker of his own destiny.

A concrete formulation of these objects is provided in

The Constitution of Free India—a draft.

and

The People's Plan for Economic Development of India.

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PARTY PAPERS AND PERIODICALS**Dailies :**

- (1) THE VANGUARD, 30 Faiz Bazar, Delhi;
Editor : Ram Singh.
- (2) SANGRAM, (Marathi); V. Patel Road, Bombay 4.
Editor : D. B. Karnik, B. A., LL. B.
- (3) HAMDARD, (Urdu); Srinagar, Kashmere;
Editor : Pandit Prem Nath Bajaj.
- (4) SWATANTRA BHARAT (Gujrathi)
Gol Limda, Astodia Road, Ahmedabad.
Editor : C. T. Daru.

Weeklies :

- (1) **INDEPENDENT INDIA**, 30 Faiz Bazar, Delhi;
Editor : M. N. Roy.
- (2) **BHAVISHYA**, (Hindi), 3 Aminabad, Lucknow;
Editor : Omkar Dutt.
- (3) **JANATA**, (Hindi), Chowhatta, Bankipore, Patna;
Editor : Shivpujan Singh.
- (4) **JANATA**, (Bengali), 15 Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta;
Editor : Hari Kumar Chakravarty.
- (5) **THE OBSERVER** (English), Cuttack, Orissa;
Editor : M. S. Mahanty, B. A.
- (6) **THE BIHAR HERALD**, (English),
Kadamkuan, Bankipore, Patna;
Editor : M. C. Samaddar.
- (7) **RADICAL**, (Telugu), Tenali,
District Guntur, Madras Presidency;
Editor : T. Gopichand.
- (8) **SHIKHA**, (Assamese), Silhet, Assam;
Editor : Syamadhan Sen Gupta.
- (9) **BELAKU**, (Kanarese) Bank Road, Dharwar
Editor : Gourish Kaikini.
- (10) **YUGANTAR**, (Marathi), 538 Narayan Peth, Poona City;
Editor : Tarkateertha Laxman Shastri Joshi.
- (11) **THE OTHER INDIA**, Bulletin published by the London
Office of the Party.

Monthlies :

- (1) **The Student World**, Ratilal Mansion, Parekh Street,
Girgaon, Bombay 4.
Editor : Nissim Ezekiel B. A. (Hons)
- (2) **Prabhati**, (Bengali), Kadamkuan, Bankipore, Patna;
Editor : M. C. Samaddar.

THE VANGUARD NEWS SERVICE :

- Offices :** (1) 30 Faiz Bazar, Delhi;
(2) 180 Fleet Street, London E. C. 4.

The party has published dozens of books on political, economic and cultural subjects, and a larger number of pamphlets. They are to be had from Renaissance Publishers, P. O. Box 580, Calcutta, the Literature Department of the Central Office of the Radical Democratic Party, 30 Faiz Bazar, Delhi; and the Modern Age Publishers, Navsari Chambers, Outram Road, Fort, Bombay.

Auxiliary and Allied Bodies

Radical Students Unions

For work among the students, the Radical Democratic Party initiates and promotes the creation of Radical Students Unions or Clubs, through which political education is spread amongst students, and students are recruited as members of the party, in all the University centres of the country.

Jagrit Mahila

To draw women into the general public and political life, the Radical Democratic Party, as the result of a Women's Training Camp held at Dehradun in June 1943, launched a movement under the name "Jagrit Mahila" (Enlightened Womanhood), under whose auspices local Jagrit Mahila Clubs are formed wherever there is a group of interested women not yet prepared to join a political party.

Indian Renaissance Association

To stimulate and quicken scientific thought and a scientific outlook on life, including its political, economic and cultural aspects, on the initiative of members of the Radical Democratic Party, Renaissance Clubs are formed in the major cities and towns of the country, where intellectuals, including leading academicians not usually active in the political field, gather to discuss and formulate problems affecting India's past, present and future in the light of rationalism and a scientific approach. For the publication of literature of this kind, the Party has created the Renaissance Publishing House, P. O. Box 580, Calcutta.

People's Guard

To attract elder boys and young men through physical training and public demonstrations, People's Guards are organised both in towns and villages, under the auspices of the Radical Democratic Party; political training is imparted to the People's Guards, and they also help to maintain order in public meetings and demonstrations. Central guidance is exercised through the party.

The Indian Federation Of Labour

The All-India Trade-Union Congress, owing to its being politically dominated by the Congress Party, having refused to declare in favour of India's participation in the war, even after the Soviet Union was attacked, the Radical Democratic Party, together with other independent trade-union leaders, took the initiative in the formation of the Indian Federation of Labour, which was formed at the All-India Anti-Fascist Labour Conference, held at Lahore on November 29th, 1941, under the presidentship of M. N. Roy.

At present, the Indian Federation of Labour has a total membership of about 600000, with 193 trade-unions affiliated. The total membership represents more than seventy per cent. of the organised workers of the country.

A big majority of the office-bearers and members of the Executive Committee and General Council of the Federation are members of the Radical Democratic Party. The office-bearers and leading members of most of the unions affiliated to the Federation also belong to the Radical Democratic Party.

